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Big dirty snowball may come our way

It's being hyped up as the 'comet of the century' — but first ISON has to survive its trip around the sun PAGES 18-19

All Wright?

RCMP says ex-aide broke the law; ex-aide says he did nothing wrong PAGE 16

PUPPY LOVE

IN WHICH SHANNON CALLS HER CONNECT AND BRINGS SOME MUCH NEEDED JOY TO THE OFFICE PAGE 21

PARLIAMENT HILL IS ALIVE ...

Eliza-Jane Scott, who plays Maria in the upcoming production of The Sound of Music, re-enacts the iconic Austrian-hills scene on Parliament Hill Wednesday. The musical runs at the NAC from Dec. 3 to Jan. 4. Story, page 10. DENIS ARMSTRONG/FOR METRO

Sticker shock for disabled riders

'Shame on you all.'
16.4 per cent hike will mean some won't be able to take transit: Para Transpo user

TREVOR GREENWAY
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Kevin Kinsella said he is "shocked" at a 16 per cent fare hike OC Transpo Community Pass users will see this year.

Community passes are transit passes that can be purchased by Ontario Disability Support Program users and registered Para Transpo customers.

Kinsella, who uses a wheelchair, showed up at the city's transit commission meeting Wednesday to urge city officials to bring down the increase, so he, and many other disabled riders, can still afford to take the bus and get around the city.

"You want to increase the community pass by 16.4 per cent and you don't see that as kind of outrageous?" he asked the committee, noting the increase is about eight times the rate of inflation. "A 16.4 per cent increase in the cost to the community pass will mean that people that can now take the bus won't be able to. I'm wondering how the commission can justify this kind of increase to the people most vulnerable and most in need in our city.... Shame on you. Shame on you all."

Part of the initiative for the increase is to bring the currently $35 monthly Community Pass in line with the $40.75-per-month seniors pass.

Transit committee member Coun. Marianne Wilkinson said the hike was too much too soon. "I really think we have to reduce that increase and try to spread that over a bit so we can do it more gradually," she said. "If you want to bring it in line, doing it all that much at one time, I think, is unfair."

With the transit commission passing the 2014 operating budget, Community Passes aren't the only thing going up. Overall fares for OC Transpo riders are going up 1.9 per cent — the lowest hike in nine years, according to Transit Commission Chair Diane Deans. She said the commission is dedicated to keeping fare hikes in line with inflation.

"In last term of council, the fare increases per annum were running around seven per cent," she said during a scrum at city hall. "We recognize that we need to keep those fares low; we're committed to doing that and I think that we've done a much better job at trying to keep those increases low."

The hikes come into effect July 1, 2014.

MORE ON TRANSIT, PAGE 4.

2014 capital projects

Where is your money going in transit?

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Newfie Tim's team double doubles service supremacy

Tim Cup. Nearly 4,000 Tim Hortons employees from more than 1,300 franchises entered competition

DENIS ARMSTRONG
ottawa@metronews.ca

For the second year in a row, a service team from Newfoundland won the annual Tim Cup Challenge, held at the Ottawa Convention Centre on Wednesday.

Team Pat-Nots, made up of manager Robbie Toibin, Tracey Pitcher, Andrew Boone and Stacey Coish beat finalist teams from Rouyn-Noranda; Springfield, Ohio; Leamington, Ont.; and Regina, to win the Tim Cup as the fastest, friendliest and most hospitable order processors in the chain of 4,350 restaurants.

Operating behind a fully stocked and functioning service counter installed onstage, the five teams were each given an identical series of challenges. Teams were timed and judged by corporate execs. In addition to bragging rights, the winning team also got a cash prize of $6,000 each.

Newfoundland's win in 2012, the first yea of the Tim Cup Challenge, gave the four-person crew from St. John's an added measure of confidence.

"We were pretty confident going in we were going to win," said the Pat-Nots' Andrew Boone.

"I'm sorry, but I just couldn't imagine anyone being faster than us."

Competition was close, according to Tim's Chief Operating Officer David Clanachan.

"The secret of our success is that we're Canadian," said Clanachan.

"We represent Canadian values. Our people like working together, and I am happy we reward their hospitality because they're the ones who've built this company."

Team Harleay of Regina goes through the paces at the Tim Cup Challenge on Wednesday. DENIS ARMSTRONG/FOR METRO

Four arrests made in Andrew Haydon Park attack

Ottawa police have arrested four men in connection with an attack on a 21-year-old man who was found in Andrew Haydon Park naked and "severely beaten" Sunday morning.

Although police initially said Sunday that the man — who is still in hospital — appeared to have been the victim of a knife attack, no mention of a knife was made in a news release issued Wednesday afternoon. Police apparently made arrests in the case as early as Monday, but no mention of that was made until media reports of the arrests surfaced Wednesday.

"Two men have been remanded into custody last Monday; and the other two men are scheduled to appear in court today," the police news release reads. It added that the police service had taken the unusual step of requesting a publication ban and said the force would not release the names of the four men.

Police are reportedly familiar with the arrested men and believe the incident was gang-related. The four men have each been charged with one count of attempted murder and one count of aggravated assault, police said. One of the men was also charged with "fail to comply."

Staff Sgt. Rick Keindel said Sunday a passerby called 911 just after 9 a.m. after seeing a man who is believed to be in his 20s without his clothes on. Keindel said the man did not have any identification on him when he was found and was in "rough shape."

Police say their investigation into the attack is ongoing and more charges may be laid.

SEAN MCKIBBON/METRO

Have any info?

Police are asking that anyone with information about the attack call West District Investigations unit at 613-236-1222 ext. 2666 or Crime Stoppers at 613-233-8477 (TIPS) or toll free at 1-800-222-8477.

More 9/11 'truther' ads to hit buses

Free Speech? City review of ad rules not about limiting free speech, Transit chair insists

TREVOR GREENWAY
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Ottawa residents can expect to see more 9/11 "truther" ads splashed across the sides of OC Transpo buses, as the group behind the ReThink 9/11 campaign announced Wednesday that a second round of advertising will hit Ottawa buses starting this December.

The city's Transit Commission is currently reviewing its advertising campaign policies after ads like the 9/11 Truth campaign and other controversial ads have raised questions about the appropriateness of advertisements on city property.

Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth spokesperson Isabelle Beenan (the group sponsoring the ads) told Ottawa city Transit Commission members that their ads are in line with the Canadian freedom of speech laws and stopping them would be a violation.

"The goal of rethink 9/11 is to make this information widely known by running advertisements in cities around the world, encouraging the public to look at evidence and decide for themselves," she said.

"Should such an activity be blocked because some in our society are uncomfortable about the implications about this building being brought down by controlled demolitions? The Canadian charter of rights and freedoms says, 'no.'"

Quoted

"Should such an activity be blocked because some in our society are uncomfortable about the implications about this building being brought down by controlled demolition?"

Isabelle Beenan, Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Trush spokesperson

A photoshopped picture of what the new ReThink 9/11 ads will look like. COURTESY RETHINK 9/11

She explained that the new ad campaign, beginning the first week of December, will feature a new question that will be printed on the back of a dozens of buses in Ottawa and hundreds of subway cars in Toronto. The question: "Have you seen the video of World Trade Centre 7's collapse?"

Commission Chair Diane Deans said it wasn't just the 9/11 truth ads that raised questions about the city's ad policies, but other campaigns, notably an atheist campaign in 2009. She said the campaign was designed for university-aged audiences, but other people saw them.

"One of the advertising standards points to age appropriateness for advertising on our buses and I just wondered how we determine the age appropriateness of an ad campaign like that," she said.

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Special constables preparing to ride OC Transpo buses, trains

In an effort to crack down on violence against OC Transpo bus drivers, train operators and riders, the City of Ottawa announced a new program that will put special constables on transit vehicles and platforms starting in January.

The new Walk and Ride program will take the patrollers out of their cars and onto OC Transpo buses, trains and at stations. It's all about visibility, says Transit Commission chair Diane Deans, in an effort to make using transit systems in Ottawa safer for everyone.

"There has been a disturbing rise in the number of driver assaults occurring on public transit across the country," she said during a Transit Commission meeting Wednesday. "Ottawa transit operators were not immune from these incidents." Deans noted that OC Transpo recorded 59 incidents of violence against drivers last year.

She said the program supports the implementation of Bill C-533 and C-402, which will hand out stiffer penalties to individuals who attack transit workers.

"Our transit providers have a right to a safe work environment free from violence and harassment," she said.

"Ensuring the safety and security of our employees is a top priority for OC Transpo and is integral to the business of providing a safe and reliable transit service for our customers."

OC Transpo general manager John Manconi said the Walk & Ride program is part of the transit company's 10-point safety plan, which the city rolled out earlier this summer. TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO

OC Transpo special constables Jim McIntyre and Sabina Majury are seen in 2008. METRO FILE

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CHEO patient Camryn Wallace, 8, hands federal Health Minister Rona Ambrose a teddy bear at the hospital on Wednesday, before the Conservative government announced it would help fund an electronic patient health record project. JOE LOFARO/METRO

CHEO announces four-year plan to go paperless

Updating. New electronic hospital system will allow patients to look up their own charts, arrange appointments online

JOE LOFARO
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The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) announced Wednesday that it will go paperless over the next four years as it upgrades its computer system to digitize and consolidate patient information into one place.

The new technology made by Epic Systems Inc. is already running in CHEO's labs and 10 of its out-patient clinics at the Smyth Road campus.

After 12 months, all 80 clinics will be using the new system and after 18 months, the hospital will launch "MyChart" for patients and their families. The new Internet portal will allow for parents, for example, to look up test results and arrange appointments from home.

The transition to electronic records is part of the hospital's long-term vision to improve patient care, though it might take some getting used to for patients and staff alike.

A CHEO pamphlet issued in September warned patients they might spend more time in waiting rooms and their first visits will take longer than usual to enter all the data into the Epic software.

"We've reduced the number of appointments available each day to give staff more time to complete your visit. We're doing our best and we appreciate your patience," reads a portion of the pamphlet.

But for parents Sandra and Ross Wallace, the project is music to their ears. Their eight-year-old daughter Camryn makes at least one visit from Carp to CHEO every month.

The young girl was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect before she was born and has had three surgeries so far.

"We've had multiple clinic appointments in one day where our files have to be transferred from clinic to clinic, so from my perspective this going to be fantastic," said Sandra Wallace, Camryn's mom. "So I'm very excited just to be able to sit there and just have it pop up on the screen and have the information right there at our fingertips."

Minister of Health Rona Ambrose visited Camryn Wednesday to make the announcement with CHEO president and CEO Alex Munter. The federal government is committing up to $2.8 million to the $7.7 million project.

"Being able to see firsthand how CHEO staff and clinicians are working to support patients reinforces the value of an integrated and connected system," said Ambrose.

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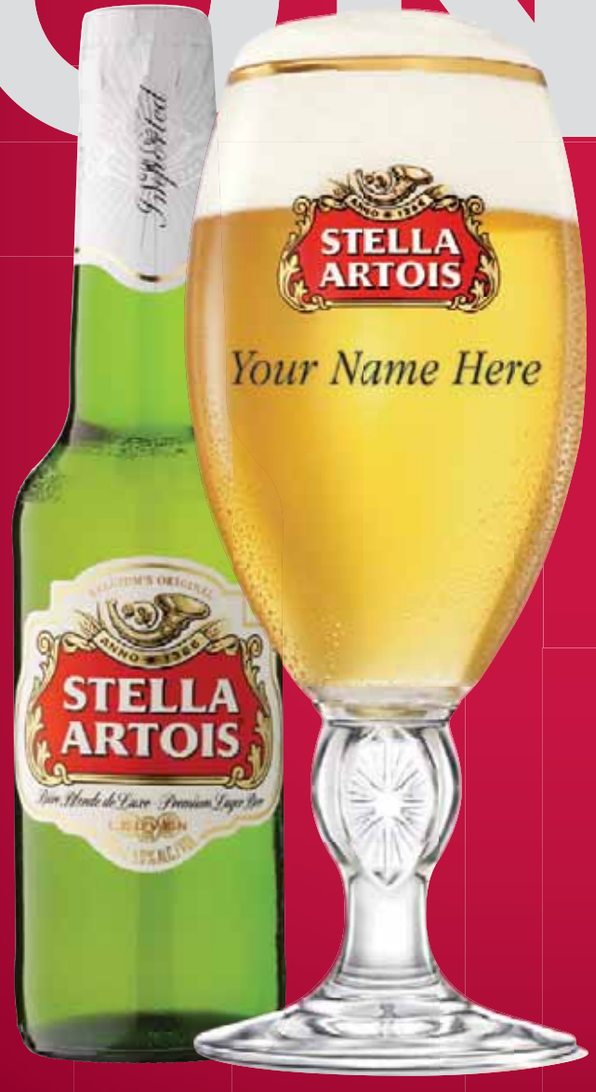

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Starting again. Langlois, Murray prove you're never too old to keep on rockin'

This is a story about middle-aged pop stars starting all over again and teaming up for a tour.

One you probably know: Tragically Hip guitarist Paul Langlois, whose second solo album, Not Guilty, dropped on Nov. 5.

You'd think after 30 years of playing with the Hip, Langlois would make the transition from sedate strummer to out-there frontman easily — but the truth is, it scares him.

"I'm out of my comfort zone," says Langlois. "Being out front is not what I normally do. It takes a lot of work to get comfortable, but I'm getting there. I want to do this because I'm almost 50 and need a new challenge. It's really exciting to be playing my own stuff. It's like I'm 25 and just starting again."

That's a sentiment 44-year-old Australian singer-songwriter Pete Murray can relate to. Langlois met Murray through his bass player Jeff Montgomery and found the chemistry, both musically and personally, good. Someone he could identify with.

With hit songs So Beautiful and three gold records, Murray is a major star back home but a virtual unknown in North America. He'll be opening for Langlois and Greg Ball at Zaphod's Thursday, playing tunes from his new self-titled EP.

"It's just like 2003 when I released my first album, Feeler," Murray says. "These were big songs back home, but nobody knows me here. At the time, I thought the record label could have released it in North America, but they wouldn't take that chance. So here I am, starting all over again.

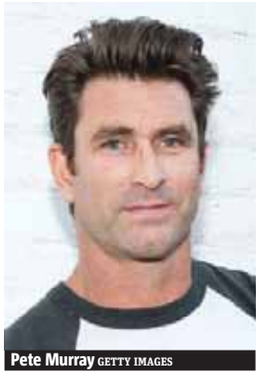
"I had to ask myself, 'Is is worth it?' Do I really want to start all over again? But I couldn't turn down the chance to be in Canada again — and we're having fun.

"So I'm optimistic."

Paul Langlois, Greg Ball and Pete Murray play Zaphod's, 27 York St. Thursday at 8 p.m. Tickets are $12 at the door or online at zaphods.ca.

DENIS ARMSTRONG/FOR METRO

Paul Langois TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE



Pete Murray GETTY IMAGES

Ottawa comedian's TV show almost a reality

The Angelo Show. Angelo Tsarouchas says Vince Vaughn backing his sitcom pilot is 'like a freakin' dream come true'

JOE LOFARO
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Angelo Tsarouchas used to flip burgers at his dad's restaurant in Ottawa before he broke into the comedy scene and moved to Los Angeles. Now he's working with Vince Vaughn to sell a pilot for a new sitcom on CTV.

"It's a typical Canadian story: I left Ottawa to go to Hollywood so I could come back to Canada to shoot this," said Tsarouchas in a telephone interview Tuesday from a hotel in Athens, Greece, where he's shooting a documentary for HBO Canada. "I'm so elated that Vince believes in me so much and that CTV network is excited about me and all these wonderful things are happening. I think hard work eventually does pay off."

The Angelo Show isn't a done deal yet, but the 48-year-old comedian who was raised in Ottawa said the Canadian broadcaster is "very interested" in developing it. Tsarouchas and Vaughn, one of the executive producers, will have to rework the script and choose a location to shoot the first episode.

Angelo Tsarouchas says Vince Vaughn backing The Angelo Show is "a freakin' dream come true." COURTESY OF ROBERT KAZANDJIAN

Tsarouchas describes the storyline as a cross between King of Queens and Frasier, with a few references to his real life Greek-Canadian upbringing and getting married in his 40s to a "younger, prettier" woman.

Vaughn's Wild West Picture Show Productions, known for films like The Break-Up and Four Christmases, is backing the show as well as his TBS comedy Sullivan & Son, in which Tsarouchas plays a taxi driver.

Tsarouchas is in Greece now. He said he learned about the production company picking up his show on Facebook this week and he couldn't be happier.

Staring at the Acropolis from his hotel room balcony on Tuesday, he called the sitcom "a personal triumph."

"When you see a guy like Vince Vaughn saying we're going to make The Angelo Show, it's like a freakin' dream come true," said Tsarouchas. "Even to get to this point, it's so hard now — and I'm the first one to say it — it's so hard to get your foot in the door."

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Transit

Presto users not taking advantage of auto-reload

Despite 140,000 OC Transpo Presto cards currently in use on Ottawa's transit system, fewer than 10,000 commuters are using the auto-reload feature — one of the main reasons the city agreed to bring in the cards.

The numbers have councillor and transit commissioner Keith Egli worried.

"I find that a little bit concerning because, certainly, I think around the table, that was one of the big features we saw in bringing Presto to town — is to reduce the lineups, make it more efficient and convenient for people," he said at a transit commission meeting on Wednesday.

OC Transpo general manager John Manconi said he isn't sure why riders aren't taking full advantage of the auto-reload feature, but he noted that the website can be a bit confusing.

Even while trying to load his own daughter's card over the weekend, Manconi admitted that he found the wording on the website is not "intuitive."

More than 200,000 cards have been distributed, 69 per cent of which are currently in use.

The system has seen 14 million taps since its inception, but Manconi added that more improvements are still needed. The key, though, is the auto-renew feature.

"When we roll out our customer-care program in 2014, you're going to see strong customer focus and support on getting people to embrace these features," said Manconi.

TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO

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Musical trades hills for The Hill

Oh Maria, Maria.
Promotion for NAC's The Sound of Music hits Parliament

DENIS ARMSTRONG
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Parliament Hill was alive Wednesday with The Sound of Music.

Ticket sales for the National Arts Centre's new production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic are so strong that the show's been extended twice, to Jan. 4, 2014, and it hasn't even opened yet.

Opening night is Dec. 3.

Sensing a hit on her hands, Eliza-Jane Scott, the Nepean actress who plays Maria von Trapp, couldn't resist the opportunity to throw out her arms and twirl and twirl while singing The Sound of Music on Parliament Hill while cameras rolled.

And why not? With so many well-loved songs like Climb Ev'ry Mountain, My Favourite Things, and Do-Re-Mi, The Sound of Music is one of the few musicals that a company as big as the National Arts Centre can afford to do on its own.

For Scott, the big challenge is how she will measure up to Julie Andrews, who played Maria in the definitive 1965 film. One reporter at Wednesday's media scrum even asked Scott how it felt to play Andrews.

"Julie Andrews is amazing," said Scott, who is a member of the NAC's English Theatre Ensemble. "Of course she is identified with the role, but that's not the real Maria. Don't forget, this is Austria in the 1930s. It's a dark, troubling story, set in World War II. The musical uses dark moments brilliantly to touch and inspire us with hope."

Tickets for The Sound of Music are available at the NAC box office or online at nac-cna.ca and Ticketmaster outlets.

Actress Eliza-Jane Scott smiles as she answers questions from the media Wednesday at a photo-op on Parliament Hill. She plays Maria von Trapp in the National Arts Centre's upcoming production of The Sound of Music.
DENIS ARMSTRONG/FOR METRO

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Big Tobacco. Philip Morris to enter growing e-cigarette market

Philip Morris International Inc. said Wednesday it plans to enter the growing electronic cigarette business late next year and accelerate the launch of its reduced-risk products.

The company is joining many tobacco companies venturing into smokeless tobacco and other nicotine products to diversify beyond the declining traditional cigarette business as tax increases, health concerns, smoking bans and stigma cut into demand.

Big business

Electronic cigarettes are battery-powered devices that heat a liquid nicotine solution, creating vapour that users inhale.

- There are now several million users worldwide.

The company is the world's second-biggest cigarette seller.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

European Union

Plan to sell Maltese citizenship on hold

Malta has indefinitely postponed implementing a law to sell its citizenship — and entrance into the European Union — for 650,000 euros ($910,000) following a massive outcry on the Mediterranean island.

The law would have allowed foreigners to buy a Maltese passport without any residency or investment requirements, thus gaining coveted entrance and residency in any of the other 27 EU member states. The government had predicted the proposal would bring in $42 million annually and help ease the country's deficit.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seal pups released with high-tech transmitters

A rehabilitated harbour seal pup equipped with satellite tag on its head prior to being released back into the wild. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver. Satellite tracking devices show rescued seals' progress once released

The Vancouver Aquarium has released seven rescued seal pups back into the ocean, with plans to track them in the wild.

Five of the pups have been equipped with satellite transmitters that will provide the aquarium's Marine Mammal Rescue Centre with information about where the seals go and how they do after returning to the wild.

Veterinarian Martin Haulena says that information helps the team determine the ideal conditions for release and whether any changes need to be made to the rehabilitation program.

The satellite-linked tags, glued to the hair coat on their heads, cost about $1,500 each and about $200 a month to monitor. They have a battery life of about a year, but may fall off well before then.

"They might only last a few weeks but we have had them last about 280 days before," Haulena said.

Last year, the aquarium tracked five other rehabilitated seal pups and found that the animals dispersed widely from the area they were released from.

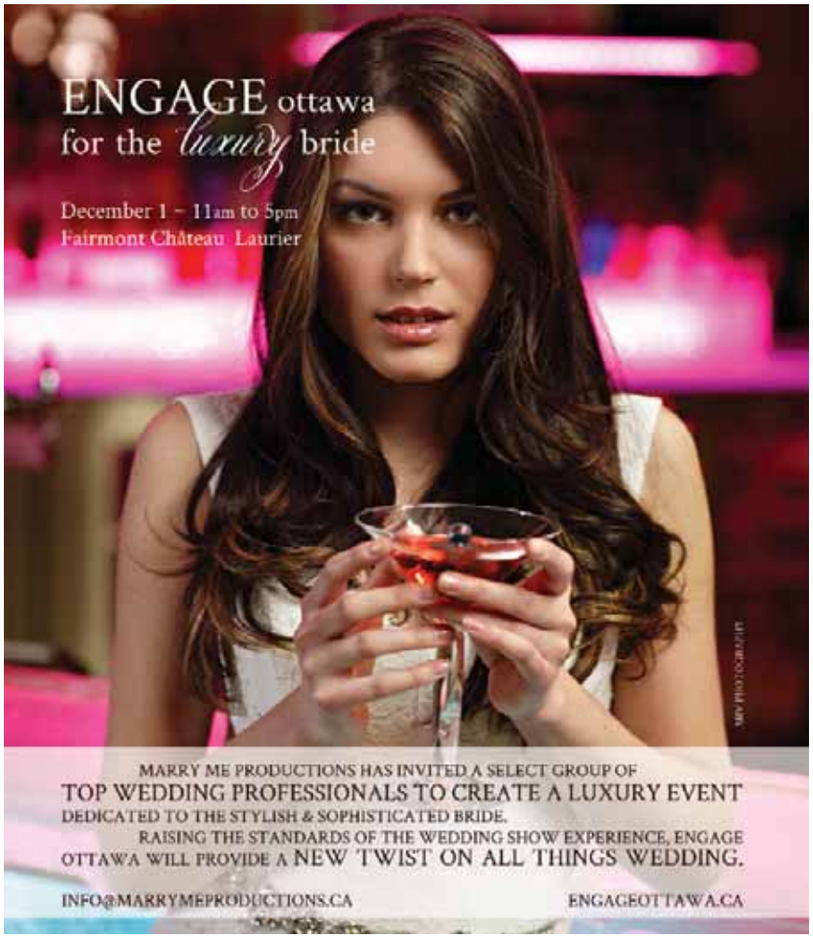
Earlier this year, the aquarium released a rehabilitated adult porpoise with a satellite tag that fed information back to the team for 70 days.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Under the sea

"I want to see how these animals do, and how they do kind of dictates what we do next year."

Martin Haulena, Vancouver Aquarium veterinarian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Murdoch and wife say divorce is 'amicable'

News Corp. Split won't affect control of the billionaire media mogul's companies

Media baron Rupert Murdoch and his soon-to-be-ex-wife said they were parting with "mutual respect" Wednesday after telling a judge they had reached a divorce deal.

The chairman of News Corp. and 21st Century Fox and his wife of 14 years, Wendi Deng Murdoch, shook hands and briefly hugged after a brief proceeding in a Manhattan court. The terms of the agreement weren't disclosed in court.

"We are pleased to announce that we have reached an amicable settlement of all matters relating to our divorce," the two said in a statement released through a publicist.

Rupert Murdoch. AP PHOTO/ LOUIS LANZANO

The divorce will end a third marriage for Rupert Murdoch, 82. Forbes pegged his and his family's wealth at $13.4 billion in September.

Murdoch's News Corp. split this year into two companies: the journalism and publishing portion, still called News Corp., and the more profitable film and TV unit, 21st Century Fox. Both are publicly traded and based in New York.

Wendi Deng Murdoch. AP PHOTO/ LOUIS LANZANO

The divorce won't affect control of the companies or the succession plan for them. Rupert Murdoch controls them through a family trust that benefits his four children from previous marriages.

He and Wendi Deng Murdoch, 44, have two school-age daughters, Grace and Chloe. They are beneficiaries of 8.7 million non-voting shares being held in a separate trust. Wendi Deng Murdoch is not a shareholder, according to a person familiar with the situation.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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New bill to prohibit the sending of 'intimate images' without consent

Cyberbullying casualties. Canadians have been touched by suicides of Todd Loik in Saskatchewan and Rehtaeh Parsons in Nova Scotia

The Conservative government has introduced a wide-ranging bill designed to make it illegal to distribute "intimate images" without consent and easier to get such images scrubbed off the Internet.

The proposed law includes tentacles that touch on everything from terrorism and organized crime to stealing cable TV — measures Justice Minister Peter MacKay said are necessary due to the digital nature of the crimes.

"This is the type of crime that really knows no borders," MacKay said Wednesday as he and Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney announced the legislation.

"Once (an image is) on the Internet, once it's been uploaded, it has the ability to go viral. We need to also empower the police to have the tools to track and preserve and present information (to the courts)."

If passed, the legislation would also give courts the power to seize computers, cellphones and other devices used in the offence, and to help victims recoup part of the cost of removing the images from the Internet.

The legislation defines an "intimate image" as one that "depicts a person engaged in explicit sexual activity or that depicts a sexual organ, anal region or breast."

The government bills the legislation as part of its commitment to help put an end to the kind of online exploitation and harassment that has led a number of Canadian youth to take their own lives in recent years.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Several hundred people attend a community vigil to remember Rehtaeh Parsons at Halifax's Victoria Park in April. Parsons ended her own life following months of bullying after she was allegedly sexually assaulted by four boys and a photo of the incident was distributed.

ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS/FILE

Rationale

The bill is here to help: MacKay

Justice Minister Peter MacKay said it's clear that online harassment can destroy lives. The bill closes a "gap" in the Criminal Code and modernizes the law to take into account the prolific distribution of images and words over the Internet, and the resulting impact on young people, he said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Youth say online slurs common, but not OK: Poll

A poll released Wednesday shows that young people are coming around to the idea that it's wrong to contribute to the prevalence of online slurs. ISTOCK

Most young people say they aren't very offended about the slurs and mean-spirited videos mocking overweight people or gays or blacks that they encounter on social-networking sites like Facebook and Twitter.

"You can't let those things get to you," says 15-year-old Vito Calli, an immigrant from Argentina whose online friends tease him with jokes about Hispanics.

In a notable shift, however, young people are coming around to the idea that it's wrong to contribute to this ugly side of the Internet free-for-all, a poll released Wednesday shows.

A bare majority, 52 per cent, of people ages 14 to 24 now say it's never OK to engage in discriminatory language, even when it's just among friends who don't really mean it. That's up from 44 per cent in 2011.

A stronger majority — nearly six in 10 — say using slurs is wrong, even if you say you're "just kidding." Only about half were so disapproving two years ago. Meanwhile, the share of young people who come across slurs online has held steady, according to the new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and MTV.

More than half of young users of YouTube, Facebook and gaming communities say they sometimes or often encounter biased messages. Teens and twentysomethings say these slurs and taunting images they see online are mostly meant as jokes.

"Sometimes I make a couple of jokes that might be offensive to someone and I don't even realize it," said Calli of Reading, Pa. "You forget there's a person behind the computer with actual feelings."

Because a friend chastised him, the high school sophomore has tried to stop labelling anything uncool either "gay" or "retarded." He's finding that a difficult habit to break.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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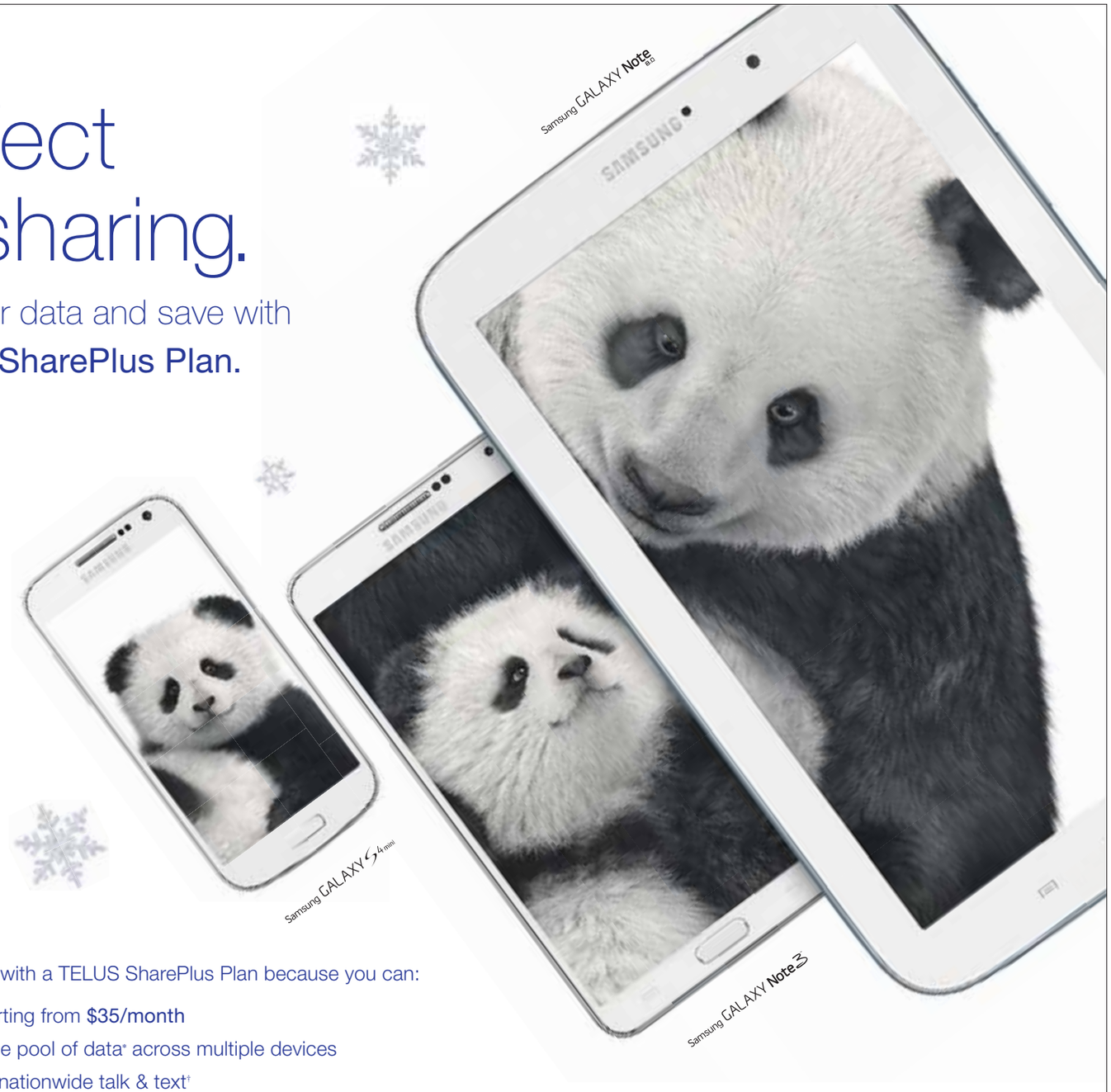

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The Duffy scandal: Now RCMP say PM's ex-aide broke the law

That $90,000 cheque. 'My actions were lawful,' Nigel Wright says as Mounties issue explosive new findings

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's former chief of staff is facing fresh allegations he broke the law by cutting a $90,000 cheque to Sen. Mike Duffy.

But Nigel Wright is fighting back with a statement that insists he was only acting in the best interests of taxpayers and he did nothing wrong.

A new document from RCMP Cpl. Greg Horton says Nigel Wright "did, without the consent in writing of the head of the branch of government, pay a reward or confer an advantage or benefit on Mike Duffy."

Horton also says Wright and Duffy "did commit breach of trust in connection with the duties of their offices," contrary to a section of the Criminal Code.

The documents also indicate Wright told the Mounties that Harper was unaware of his decision to personally pay back Duffy's ineligible expense claims.

In a statement issued by his lawyer, Peter Mantas, Wright denies all wrongdoing. "My intention was always to secure repayment of funds owed to taxpayers," the statement reads.

"I acted within the scope of my duties and remain confident that my actions were lawful. I have no further comment at this time."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nigel Wright allegedly wrote: "We are good to go from the PM." SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

New RCMP filings

Who to believe?

Nigel Wright went to Prime Minister Stephen Harper for approval of a secret plan that would have seen the Conservative party repay Mike Duffy's expenses, new RCMP documents suggest.

But when the party balked at Duffy's $90,000 bill, Wright stepped in to pay the bill himself — apparently without Harper's knowledge.

Harper has called that a "deception."

But new RCMP court filings quote Wright as getting a green light from Harper. THE CANADIAN PRESS

New blow to Rob Ford? A class-action lawsuit

Ford has tarnished the city's brand, lawyer says. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

A new website has been launched to recruit claimants for a class-action lawsuit against disgraced Mayor Rob Ford.

The site claims he was negligent and acted in bad faith in his role as mayor.

"I'm sick and tired of it. Enough is enough. I can't handle it any more. I can't sit on the couch and do nothing," said Toronto lawyer Jose Rodrigues, who launched stoprob.org.

"I'm trying to gather forces and move it ahead."

To proceed to court, the claim would need to have a lead plaintiff and then be approved by a judge.

In a draft statement of claim posted on the website, Rodrigues, a fresh graduate from the University of Ottawa law school, is seeking $5.2 million in total damages — approximately a dollar for each Toronto resident in general plus a dollar each in punitive damages.

The plaintiffs will include residents of Toronto "whose reputation has been negatively impacted by the defendant's admission to smoking crack cocaine coupled with his refusal to resign."

Within 30 minutes of the launch of the website, Rodrigues said "dozens" of people signed up as potential plaintiffs to represent other Torontonians in the planned action.

Rodrigues hopes to file it next week.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

High-value brand

Rodrigues, 28, articled in the federal justice department and specializes in civil litigation.

- **Value.** He says the Toronto "brand" is an essential asset of the city, worth millions of dollars. Fords "drunken stupors" tarnish the value of the brand, he says.

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Rail firms told:

Towns must get danger alerts

Months after the train disaster in Lac-Mégantic, Que., the federal government is forcing rail companies to tell municipalities when they take dangerous goods through.

But the information won't flow until well after dangerous substances in question have rolled through town. Transport Minister Lisa Raitt hopes it will result in better communication.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Street View

Google launches a walk in the park

Parks Canada has teamed up with Google to offer virtual tours through more than 70 parks and historic sites across the country.

Google Street View can now be used to explore the likes of Banff National Park, the Rideau Canal and Halifax Citadel national historic sites, Green Gables Heritage Place and Emerald Lake in Yoho National Park.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Judge accused

Panel quits in nude-photos case

A panel investigating a Manitoba judge over nude photos has resigned en masse, potentially putting the investigation back at square one.

A committee of the Canadian Judicial Council has been examining Manitoba Queen's Bench Justice Lori Douglas, who faced a complaint in 2010 that she had sexually harassed a man named Alex Chapman.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kevin Chenais sits in his mobility scooter in front of an ambulance in London, England, on Wednesday. Chenais, who has a medical condition, will travel by ambulance and ferry back to France. KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Man deemed too fat to fly or take train

Going home. A ferry company has accepted the 230-kg Frenchman for a trip across the English Channel

He has been turned down by planes, trains and even a cruise ship in his quest to return home — and his family says it's because he has been deemed too fat to travel. Now Frenchman Kevin Chenais' long and fitful journey is coming to an end.

Chenais, who weighs 230 kilograms, says he has been repeatedly refused transport over the past two weeks as he sought to get home to France. But now P&O Ferries has offered to take the 22-year-old in his ambulance on Wednesday.

The odyssey began when British Airways refused to honour his return ticket from the United States, where he had been receiving medical care for a hormone imbalance. Chenais said Carnival Cruises also rejected his request for a cabin on a trans-Atlantic voyage.

Virgin Atlantic airlines stepped in to fly him to London, where he had planned to take the Eurostar train home. But Eurostar refused to allow him on board because safety rules governing travel through the Channel Tunnel require all passengers to have the ability to be safely evacuated.

Eurostar paid for the family's hotel room and worked with P&O to find a solution. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Outraged mom

"It's not the fault of my son to be big. He has a genetic illness."

Christina Chenais, saying her son was discriminated against because of his weight.

India

$1.15M in gold bars found on plane

Cleaners found a stash of 24 gold bars worth more than $1.15 million hidden in a Jet Airways airplane toilet after a flight from Bangkok landed in Kolkata, eastern India, officials said Wednesday.

A customs official said the gold bars, weighing around one kilogram each, were in two bags.

India is one of the world's biggest consumers of gold. The government increased the gold import duty recently, which officials say has encouraged smuggling.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Senior care growing to pot? 550 marijuana plants found in N.B. special care home

There needs to be an independent review of inspection policies following the discovery of a marijuana growing operation in the basement of a special care home for seniors in New Brunswick, the province's Opposition Liberals said Wednesday.

The party's social development critic said he finds it difficult to understand how marijuana could be grown undetected in a facility that is subject to inspections and entrusted to care for the elderly.

The RCMP say they seized 550 marijuana plants and marijuana-growing equipment Friday after a fire erupted at the Forever Young Special Care Home in Clarks Corner. The six residents of the home safely escaped.

Investigators said they believed the fire was related to the marijuana growing operation.

Jan Seely, president of the New Brunswick Special Care Home Association, said the residents of the home are being relocated and it has closed.

There are more than 400 special care homes for seniors in the province.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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COSMIC GIFT: THE SNOW

A galactic visitor, travelling hundreds of thousands of kilometres an hour, will soon catapult around the sun and — if it lives up to all the hype and survives the journey — may give us the show of a lifetime; an early Christmas gift from the cosmos. Discovered just over a year ago, ISON has the potential to be the 'comet of the century,' lighting up the night, perhaps even visible during the day, as it streaks across the sky on its way out of our solar system.

DEAN LISK
Metro in Toronto

When it comes to outer space, and how things get from Point A to Point B in the universe, comets — with their elongated orbits — open up a world of wonder.

"Some ideas tend to return, like the comets themselves," says Dr. Sara Schechner, author of Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology, and curator of the Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments at Harvard University.

"We went from a period where everyone was afraid of them, to a period where they were viewed as too small to hurt us, and now we are back to, 'We better be watching out for them.'"

Schechner says some in the scientific community have suggested comets may have been responsible for both life and death, speculating they brought the building blocks of life — water and organic chemicals — to Earth and were also responsible, through collisions, for climate change and extinctions.

"When I am reading this in some of the scientific literature it resonates with some of the older beliefs," says Schechner, who adds that for thousands of years, anything not planned — like the sudden appearance of a comet — was greeted as an omen.

"People thought of comets as having a divine purpose," says Schechner. "Some thought they were divinely created and appeared in the sky when God wanted to send people a message about what they should be doing, or as a warning, or to announce a big event. And it could be a good event, but mostly they were terrible things, like a plague, the death of your king, war, revolution."

Others thought comets were the result of elements excreted from the earth that caught fire in the sky and caused terrible things to happen, such as a bad harvest or disease. "If you breathed in anything from them, you could come down with the plague. They caused revolution because they were hot and dry and kindled anger in people.

"People at the time didn't think of them as some kind of dirty snowball hurling around."

So what is a comet? Basically, they are big, dirty snowballs. That is what scientific enlightenment, starting with Isaac Newton, Edmund Halley and others, has taught us. Its birth takes place in the Oort cloud, a hypothesized area roughly a light-year from our sun, says Robyn Foret, an amateur astronomer with the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

The cloud may seem far away, but it is close enough on a galactic scale that gravitational forces from our sun — and even other stars — have an impact, forcing dust, water and gases to clump together to form a nucleus, Foret says. Eventually, gravity may also send it falling toward our sun — like Comet ISON, which is about to journey behind our biggest star.

"So, if you can imagine this clump of water, ice and different gases and dust falling towards the sun, as it gets closer to it, it starts to warm up a bit," he says, adding the lighter gases will escape from the nucleus, and form a coma — a fizzy glow — around the object. As the comet travels closer to the sun, it heats up even more. The ice begins to evaporate and a tail will start to form as more gases and dust escape.

Schechner says it was Newton and Halley who really showed comets were part of our solar system and not supernatural at all. Still, they didn't leave all the old superstitions behind.

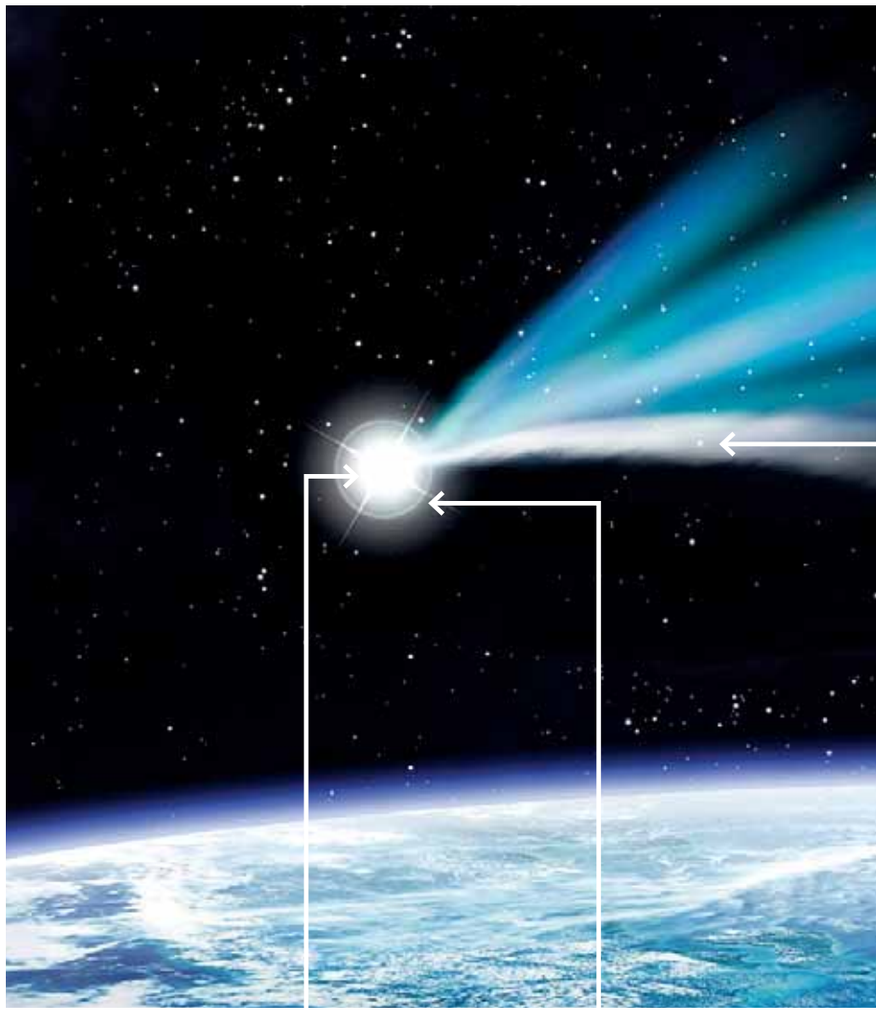
"They were too good to get rid of," she says. "Newton says, 'Well, when a comet passes, its tail replenishes this vital spirit necessary for respiration and life on Earth. And, comets are dropping off supplies of water, without which the Earth would just dry up."

Schechner says Newton and Halley also speculated comets could cause the end of the world in various ways and were responsible for earlier upheavals — something modern scientists also examine.

"They aren't thinking of it in terms of omens, they are thinking of it in terms of physics," she says. "But they don't think it's some preordained plan."

Name that comet

ISON is named after the Russian-based organization that discovered it: The International Scientific Optical Network.



Not sure what you are looking at? Robyn Foret, an amateur astronomer and chair of the education and public outreach committee of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, breaks down the anatomy of a comet.

Nucleus

The dirty snowball, the nucleus is made up of dust, ice and gases. "The nucleus can be anywhere from three to 30 kilometres. Someone coined the phrase that it's a 'city-sized object,' and I like that, because cities come in different sizes. You can relate to the size of a city," says Foret.

Coma

The coma, formed by the loss of gas and dust, appears around the nucleus as it nears the sun. It can be tens of thousands of kilometres in size. "In the early days, ISON was losing 60,000 pounds of dust every minute," says Foret.

Timeline

Comet culture

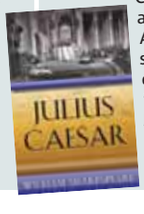
The history of comets makes for some interesting reading, with beauty, tragedy and intrigue. Here are some highlights from popular culture, including some of author Sara Schechner's celestial favourites.

28 million years B.C.

Diamonds. Scientists recently announced they believe they discovered evidence a comet crashed into the Sahara Desert in an area bordered by Egypt and Libya roughly 28 million years ago. The proof, they reported, was a black pebble that contained small diamonds created by the impact.

43 B.C.

Caesar. A comet was seen after the killing of Julius Caesar. "His adopted son, Augustus, who succeeded him, exploited it, saying it was a sign of Julius's soul taken up into heaven," Schechner says.



1066

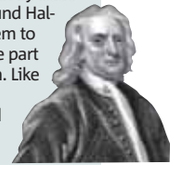
Omen. The Bayeux Tapestry, which commemorates the Norman conquest of England, includes a depiction of Halley's Comet. People are seen warning King Harold the comet is a bad omen. Below the comet is a depiction of a fleet setting sail to invade England.

1577

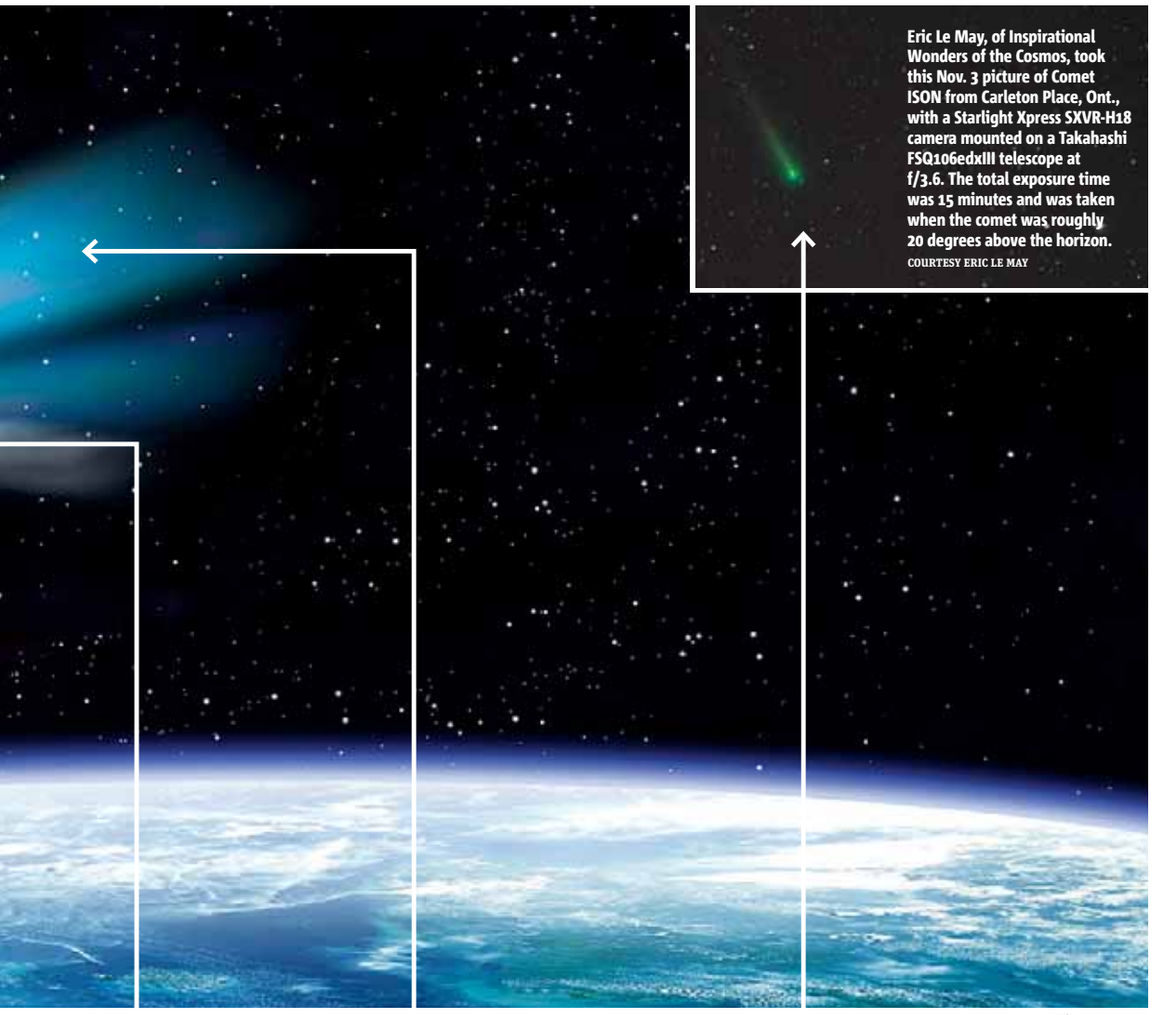
Brahe. A bright comet, seen across Europe, was observed by a number of enlightened minds, including Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe. His observations showed theories about the order of planets, moons and objects in our solar system were wrong and had to be rethought.

1680

Sungrazer. Called a Great Comet (there have been a few) and seen in daylight, this comet was seen by Isaac Newton and Edmund Halley and helped them to prove comets were part of the solar system. Like ISON, it was also a sungrazer and had a very long tail.



BALL COMETH



Eric Le May, of Inspirational Wonders of the Cosmos, took this Nov. 3 picture of Comet ISON from Carleton Place, Ont., with a Starlight Xpress SXVR-H18 camera mounted on a Takahashi FSQ106edxIII telescope at f/3.6. The total exposure time was 15 minutes and was taken when the comet was roughly 20 degrees above the horizon.
COURTESY ERIC LE MAY

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO; ISTOCK

Ion tail

Formed of lighter gases, dust and evaporating ice, the ion tail is pushed away from the nucleus by the sun's solar winds. "Regardless of the path of the comet, that gas tail will always be directly opposite the sun," says Foret, who adds the tail can be millions of kilometres long.

Dust tail

Heavier dust particles left behind by the comet will create the dust tail, which will follow the orbit of the comet. "It is like you are driving down a dirt road and there is a cloud of dust that settles behind you," says Foret. If the Earth's orbit passes through this tail, the result is a meteor shower.

Feeling the heat

ISON will pass closest to the sun on Thursday, Nov. 28.

ISON is set to pass about 1.8 million km away.

- **This is called the perihelion.** Foret says the sun is about 1.4 million kilometres in diameter and

- **One time only.** While some comets return after a short number of years, others, like ISON, will be flung out of our solar system.

ISON

The 'comet of the century'

ISON has caused a lot of interest in the astronomical community since it was discovered in September of last year. When it was first discovered some 700 million kilometres away, it appeared brighter than most comets do at that distance from the sun. This had astronomers theorizing it may become one of the brightest objects in the sky when it passes, and might even be visible in daylight.

"It might be the greatest object I will have seen in my lifetime up to now," says Gary Boyle, an amateur astronomer based near Ottawa. "The hype really has been strong in the astronomical community and is based on the idea of a naked-eye comet seen during the day that could be brighter than the full moon. But, with more observation, it may not be that bright — as in being able to be seen during the day — but it will be a fantastic comet."

How to see it

1 Telescope: You will be able to see the head of the comet, the nucleus — the brighter part in the middle — and only a portion of the tail.

2 Binoculars: You will see less detail than with a telescope, but because it will magnify the comet less, you will get a wider view, and see more of the tail.

3 Naked eye: As the comet gets closer, and depending on its brightness, you will be able to see it without any help. Unlike a solar eclipse, this is one celestial show you can watch.

WARNING: Do not look at ISON with binoculars or a telescope when it is in close proximity to the Sun, as an accidental glimpse of the sun through either will cause permanent eye damage.

Where to see it

- **Look east in the morning and ISON can be seen very briefly low in the sky.** It will soon pass below the horizon and out of view as it makes its journey behind the sun.
- **If it survives its trip around the sun, ISON will reappear in the eastern sky starting around the early morning of Dec. 9 or 10.** As the month progresses it will be visible in the western sky at night. It will come closest to Earth — roughly 85 million kilometres away — around Dec. 26.

- **Need some help?** Longpaw has created Comet ISON 2013, an iTunes and iPad app featuring a countdown clock, videos, data and charts. Distant Suns has created Comet Watch, where you can use your Apple device to help locate the comet in the sky. ISON C/2012 S1 Finder is an Android app that will also point out the comet in the sky.

1682

Halley's Comet. This was the year that Halley identified the short-period comet that bears his name, and also worked out that the comet would be visible from Earth every 75 to 76 years. The comet last passed in 1986 and is expected to return in 2061.

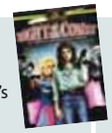
1744

Multi-tail-ented. A comet with six — yes, count them, six — tails was seen in the sky. "I would have loved to have seen that," says Schechner. The comet was observed in Europe and also in New England.

1843

Millerites. "The Millerites, a religious sect in New England, believed the end of the world was going to be predicted by a meteor storm and that a big comet would come.... And, wouldn't you know it, a big comet did come," says Schechner. "They prepared for the second coming, but obviously that didn't happen."

Mid 1980s



Films. Halley's Comet's visit in 1986 was heralded with two disaster-predicting films. Lifeforce (1985) featured a vampire-carrying space ship in the comet's coma, while Night of the Comet (1984) found the world's population wiped out by a comet; with the exception of, like, two Valley Girls.

1994

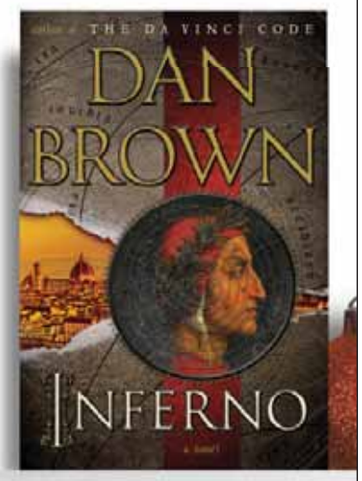
Drops on Jupiter. In a spectacular scene, Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 broke apart and crashed into Jupiter. This was the first time a comet collision was observed by scientists as it happened, and offered an unprecedented opportunity to collect data.

1997

Hale-Bopp. "Probably the most beautiful (comet) I have seen in my life is Hale-Bopp," says Schechner. "It was very beautiful, very nice." The comet also gained notoriety because members of the Heaven's Gate cult committed suicide as it passed, believing they would reach a UFO travelling in the comet's tail.

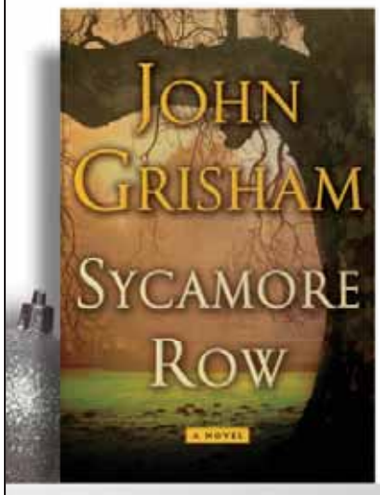
Season's READINGS

Get gifting early this year with these instant bestsellers—each under $20!*



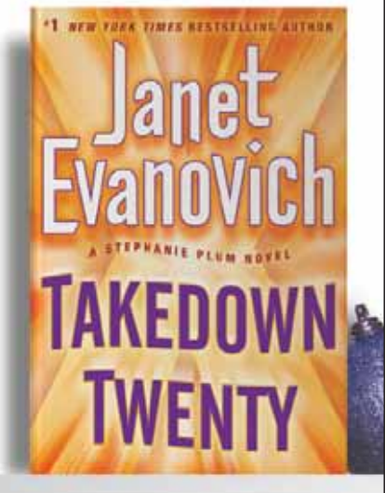
History and mystery collide, and Robert Langdon is caught in the middle.

~~$30~~ now $18!*



The master of the legal thriller returns to the world of *A Time To Kill*.

~~$32~~ now $19.20!*



If Stephanie Plum doesn't take down a notorious mob boss, he may take her out.

~~$30~~ now $18!*

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PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE
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Mark Darcy and Bill Cosby may have paved the way for it, but these days savvy entrepreneurs are cashing in on the hipster trend of wearing icky Christmas sweaters. Holiday Rejects Apparel co-owner Adil Hooda, left, and manager Jack Hsu show off some of the tacky knitwear they are selling this season. STEPHANIE DUBOIS/METRO IN EDMONTON

Don we now our ugly apparel, fa la la la

Deck Canadians with hideous sweaters. 'Tis the season to be jolly, while wearing a garish, intentionally awful top

STEPHANIE DUBOIS
Metro in Edmonton

Coloured lights, pompoms and sequins can be found all in one place this year: On an ugly Christmas sweater.

Holiday Rejects Apparel has what they consider the tackiest sweaters in Edmonton.

"Some people like outrageous, and there's some people who like a little more wintry, but for the most part I have been noticing a lot of people like the big knits," said co-owner Adil Hooda, adding one of the ugliest sweaters in the booth is a red knit with furry green circles made to look like a Christmas tree.

What began as an online store last year grew to become retail stores in Edmonton and Calgary this season, after Holiday Rejects Apparel realized people wanted to try on the tacky sweaters before buying.

Starting at $30, the kiosk has sweaters and vests with most of the Christmas season classic characters, including one with a knitted reindeer and another with sequined nutcrackers.

"Everybody has their own Christmas sweater for them, it's just a matter of digging through them, trying some on. It's always a fun time selling people an ugly Christmas sweater," said Hooda.

Canadians can purchase a sweater at holidayrejects.ca.

Random biz fact of the day

3

At least half of all job seekers with smartphones or tablets spend three hours or more looking for jobs on those devices every week.
CAREERBUILDER

Market Minute

DOLLAR 95.72¢ (+0.22¢)

TSX 13,430.01 (-12.76)

OIL $93.33 US (-1¢)

GOLD $1,258 US (-$15.50)

Natural gas: $3.68 US (+8¢)
Dow Jones: 15,900.82 (-66.21)

iKeg. How much beer is left in that keg? Now there's an app for that

Beer servers can find out in real time how many pints of their customers' favourite brews are left with the help of an app on their smartphones or tablets.

Steve Hershberger, CEO of SteadyServ Technologies, says he wants to eliminate the guesswork of how much beer is left in kegs to help bars and restaurants keep track of their inventory with his iKeg system, which has a sensor and an app.

"How much beer is left in a keg due to guessing and shaking?" asks Hershberger, who's based in Carmel, Ind., and is courting beer distributors, breweries, bars and restaurants.

"You can't see inside the keg. It's this heavy and unwieldy thing."

Hershberger estimates there are about 20 pints of beer left unsold in each keg, wasting thousands of litres of beer.

A new app aims to help bar staff know when beer is running low. DAVE MARTIN/THE CANADIAN PRESS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hershberger's iKeg system uses a sensor that goes under a beer keg to keep track of how many pints are left through changes in pressure. The information is sent wirelessly to the app.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Douglas Coupland

Douglas Coupland's latest novel, Worst. Person. Ever., is available from Random House Canada.

Day 14

metronews.ca/temp

Family planning

Workers feeling those baby blues

Having children is a big commitment that costs both time and money.

Temporary workers who can't earn a stable income and have no set work schedule often delay starting a family, according to United Way Toronto and McMaster University's "It's More than Poverty: Employment Precarity and Household Well-being" report.

The study also found that those in temporary employment are less likely to have children living at home compared to permanent workers.

Among those aged 24 to 53, 34 per cent of permanent workers have children living at home, compared to 20 per cent for temporary workers.

PHOEBE HO/FOR METRO

GETTY IMAGES

Temp Makes Lemonade from Lemons

OK, the nice thing about being a temp is that if you screw up, you leave, but you were going to leave anyway, so it's no big deal. I suppose this is true for anybody with a job, but for temps it's just more out in the open.

After almost no sleep I arrived at work only to find gossip and fear-mongering. The worst gossip was that Danimal was in a coma, when, in fact, he was in a $20,000-a-day hotel with a slightly collapsed left lung and an unhelpful feeling-sorry-for-himself attitude. Sarah No. 1 walked up to me at my desk and said, "I guess we were all behaving badly yesterday."

I was incensed: "I was doing no such thing! I was there just to listen to Dan vent about the warehouse fire! You're the one who got a room."

Sarah winked at me. "Have it your way. Here's a pile of files that need alphabetizing."

Ugh. I decided my day desperately needed some cheer, so I phoned my sister's friend who breeds golden labs. We had a quick chat, and just before lunchtime, she arrived with two blue plastic storage tubs filled with puppies. I ushered her into the admin area. In a loud crisp voice I shouted, "Oh no! There's been an explosion!"

Everyone looked stunned ...

"That's right — an explosion of cute! Hilda, release the hounds!"

Ahhh ... the puppy bomb — is there any greater experience in life? Eighteen chubby bundles of YouTubeable romping joy demanding nothing except unconditional love — and snacks. Everybody got down on the floor, and it took only a minute for people to learn that the person with the most food is the one who gets the most puppy, so in came the lunch bags. I was proud to have brought even the smallest dab of joy to the otherwise dreary lives of the soon-to-be-fired full-time staff. Yes, I was proud of myself for firmly turning the day around.

Ahhh ... the puppy bomb ... Eighteen chubby bundles of YouTubeable romping joy demanding nothing except unconditional love — and snacks.

The icing on the cake? Outside the building there was a Zombie Walk with about 200 kids dressed in their finest living dead, headed to a political protest starting outside AmQex next door.

And that's when two things happened: A massive bus, like Bon Jovi on tour, pulled into the parking lot and 50 Chinese people emerged holding measuring tapes, string and clip boards. Then half a minute later about 20 cops arrived to shut down the AmQex protest. "They make engine parts for drones," whispered Sarah.

The Chinese delegate's leader said, "I am most curious to see how protesters are handled in your country."

TO BE CONTINUED ...

Random fact of the day

- There is a new English word created every 98 minutes — or about 14.7 words per day.

SOURCE: OMG-FACTS.COM

Random biz fact of the day

70%

Anything to get the gig — 70 per cent of college students would lie on a resumé to get a job they wanted.

SOURCE: NEXCAREER

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IT'S ABOUT PARTIES, NOT POLITICAL ONES

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

Are you sick of talking about Canadian politics? Then let's discuss drinking, gossip and the need for appearances. It'll be a nice change of pace.

Specifically, let's talk about Christmas office parties. Because unlike politicians, Christmas never wears out its welcome. That's why Starbucks' Christmas decorations were rolled out this year just in time for the summer solstice. It's also why holiday events stretch on for weeks of gingerbread-and-icing-laced excess, like an anti-Lent.

I, for instance, have three different work-related Christmas parties coming up. And hooray, because what better way to throw off the shackles of work than to get together with a bunch of people you work with and discuss work? You can just feel yourself unwinding.

Admittedly, footloose behaviour can often be the most memorable element of a Christmas office party. My strongest memory from the first one I went to was Barb the secretary. Barb was the sort of secretary who had an eyeglasses chain, patterned flower dresses, and enough years behind her that she found nothing offensive about the words "Barb" or "secretary."

She was usually very staid, but at this party — well, you think Wrecking Ball was shocking? Some people say things like the Berlin Wall or Paul Henderson are the defining memories of their youth. I have Barb dancing on her chair with a rum and Coke in each hand.

Barb's brand of behaviour is why so many etiquette columns advise you to attend a party full of food, drink and friends and then nibble, sip and mumble your way through the night, because "you're being watched by your superiors at all times." What fun!

Well, I say deck that advice right in the halls. If I'm going to attend three of these things this year, then I'm going to Be Like Barb even as I remain a gracious guest.

Here are a few office-party etiquette tips I've come up with that will allow you to embrace the Christmas spirit(s).

- Most experts advise you shouldn't have more than two alcoholic drinks with office buddies, so bring an enormous canister to drink from.
- Kissing a co-worker is always a grey area, so remember that mistletoe provides full diplomatic immunity, as is written in the Geneva Convention.
- If The Christmas Shoes, Simply Having a Wonderful Christmas Time or Jingle Bell Rock come over any sound system, you will be within your rights to end the party and burn the building to the ground. Dignity demands it.
- Show superiors your work ethic, even in a casual setting, by working extra hard in the rumour mill.
- Remember that if you get blackout drunk you shouldn't worry about what happened, because everyone will record it on their cellphones anyway.
- Perhaps most important — don't overstay your welcome, especially if your hosts are hinting strongly that it's time to go.

Which would normally bring us back to Canadian politics, but I'm sick of talking about it, so let's move on. It's in the past and what's done and done. Besides, if politicians' ifs and buts were candy and nuts, every day would be Christmas.

ZOOM

No word from PM as activists charged

GRAHAM HUGHES/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec protesters demand action

A Greenpeace activist protests on top of the Biosphere in Montreal, Wednesday, calling for the release of his colleagues who are being held in Russia on various charges including piracy.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Harper?

- A Greenpeace spokesman says the group is surprised by the silence of the Harper government, which it says still has not publicly intervened to denounce the attitude of the Russian government in the arrests.

One Canadian still in Russian prison

The three Greenpeace protesters who scaled Montreal's Biosphere structure Wednesday will face criminal charges.

They came down on their own and surrendered to police after several hours perched from the federally owned dome.

Two Canadians were among the 28 Greenpeace activists arrested by Russian authorities during a protest at a Gazprom oil-drilling platform in the Arctic Circle in October.

One of the two Canadians — Alexandre Paul — remains behind bars while Paul Ruzycki was granted bail earlier this week. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Clickbait

ANDREW FIFIELD
andrew.fifield@metronews.ca

Bob Dylan's camp finally got around to releasing an official video for Like a Rolling Stone. Gathering no moss, the ultra-modern clip for the 1965 song is a wacky interactive experience of channel surfing through celebrities and humble folk alike. See it for yourself at video.bobdylan.com, and check out these others too.

Bob Dylan GETTY IMAGES

Arcade Fire – Reflektor: The sartorially demanding band are old hands at the interactive video game, debuting the trick with a childhood-mining experience for We Used To Wait (thewildernessdowntown.com) in 2010. Reflektor provides a similarly personal stamp, this time allowing you to use a phone or tablet to become a passenger on a woman's adventures in Haiti. (justareflektor.com)

Death By Chocolate — Tell Me What You See: A conundrum. How to make a largely forgettable modern rock song stand out from the crowd? The answer is deceptively simple, of course. Allow mouse-wielding sadists to conduct high-concept torture (i.e., an aggressive bath from a milk balloon or a flounder to the face) on a helpless man. All in slow motion. (tellmewhatyousee.ch)

The Interactive Saved By The Bell Game: A very funny 16-bit-style slice of choose your own adventure fan fiction. Find out what it's like to be Zack Morris, enduring the pressure of your high school's entire social structure revolving around you for some reason. (youtube.com/thefinebros)

Twitter

@metropicks asked: Traffic circles are picking up momentum in Canada because they're safe and good for the environment. What's your take?

@21stCenturyLeft: They have to be done right if they're going to be implemented. Size matters with traffic circles.

@monahb: we have (two) nearby and they are just great. Took a while for some drivers to figure them out.

@Breezy_Liz: try driving in the #UK come back and sigh #OhCanada! Our roads are fabulous! #crossroads

@DerickONeill: we have them in Ireland they are an absolute nightmare. Some have lights right beside them so cars get backed up on

@bzalu: they are joke (a) in Winnipeg, intersections are not large enough to accommodate .

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: ottawaletters@metronews.ca

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Are you hip to the Chive?

Keep Calm and Chive On. Local chapter of charity has amassed thousands of followers in just a few months

BACKSTAGE PASS
Jen Traplin
ottawa@metronews.ca

Chive Nation Ottawa's first event raised $12,000 for Chive Charities. COURTESY CHIVE NATION OTTAWA

T-shirts and stickers with the phrase "Keep Calm and Chive On" are making appearances all over Ottawa — but what exactly does it mean?

TheCHIVE.com is a website created by American brothers Leo and John Resig in 2008 as a place to share funny, viral and interesting stories and photos.

The site has grown from two visits per day to over 750,000.

Recently, the Resig brothers launched Chive Charities, a non-profit pending organization that encourages Chive fans, or Chivers, to "champion orphaned causes."

So far, the group has donated to veterans, accident victims, kids suffering from health problems and a fire department tasked with relocating victims of hurricane Sandy, just to name a few.

Now, Chive chapters are popping up all over the world, including one right here in Ottawa, all with the goal of raising money through events and crowdfunding for those in need.

Launched in July, the Ottawa chapter has grown quickly, amassing thousands of online followers in just a few months.

"I started it on Instagram with just a couple of posts of people sending their selfies with Chive shirts on and then I moved to Twitter and Facebook," says Brian, the director of Chive Nation Ottawa, who prefers to remain anonymous for personal reasons.

"Next thing you know, I had planned a meet-up to raise money for Chive Charities down at the Honest Lawyer. We sold out the event on a Saturday night and we raised $12,000, making us the No. 2 fundraiser for Chive Charities in the world at this time."

Chive Nation Ottawa hosted a second event in September, raising another $10,000 for Chive Charities.

But, because it's an American organization, all funds raised go to U.S. causes.

Hoping to help out on a more local level, Brian reached out to Chive Charities executives and, with their blessing, Chive Nation Ottawa is now throwing its support behind existing causes here in the capital, recently helping out with two events to raise funds for Ottawa residents in need of medical treatment not covered by OHIP.

He says the plan for Chive Nation Ottawa from now on is to continue hosting events in support of Chive Charities, but also to pitch in locally as often as possible.

"What we intend on doing is empowering lesser known issues — people, perhaps, who can't get help from some of the bigger charity organizations, and getting out and using the phenomenon of the Internet and crowd funding to really make a difference."

For more, visit facebook.com/chivenationottawa.

Replicating the high school experience

Interview. Chris Lilley talks about bringing Ja'mie King: Private School Girl to North America and drawing on familiar memories

T. MICHELLE MURPHY
Metro World News

Chris Lilley stars as Ja'mie King in Ja'mie King: Private School Girl. CONTRIBUTED

Fans of Australia's We Can Be Heroes and Summer Heights High are on the edge of their seats anticipating the return of TV's queen bee, Ja'mie King. The ultimate mean girl is now the star of her own Kardashian-style reality series in Ja'mie King: Private School Girl. To learn more about the new show, airing Sundays on HBO, we spoke with comedian Chris Lilley, who created and plays Ja'mie King.

Ja'mie's from We Can Be Heroes and Summer Heights High, but can you tell us what the new series has in store?
So Ja'mie's always been a private school girl, and in Summer Heights High (a mockumentary series about public high school life) she did a term away — but in this one, it's just back to her. It's her last three months of school. She's the school captain, she's on top of the world and bossier than ever. It's sort of put together like a reality show, like she is Kim Kardashian or something. She's got her own show this time, and it's all about her school life and family life. And so it sets up in the first episode that it's about her downfall. It's narrated by Ja'mie and it's all teenage drama and friends issues and boy issues and all of the sort of things that happen in the last few months of school. And, yeah, it's the first time I've done a show that is only about one character, so it's a chance to really get stuck in that world.

If she's on the top of the world right now, does that mean she learned nothing from her visit to public school?
Yeah, she never learns anything, she's just all about herself (laughs). You kinda get the impression at the end of Summer Heights High that it's done nothing, she's still glad she is a private school girl.

Why do you think she's your most popular character?
I don't think she — I don't know if she is. When I go around in public, I have lots of people come up and recognize me from the shows, and I play lots of characters and probably Jonah (from Summer Heights High) and Nathan from Angry Boys are the ones that people would call out, they're more recognizable. I know a lot of people really like Ja'mie — but for a lot of people, she drives them crazy. I don't know; I don't analyze it much, I just do it.

So why is she the subject of your first solo show? Is she your favourite?
I really like her. It's hard, because they are all my favourites. I wanted to do a show about one character, and so it was more like she fit into that idea because she's been in two other shows. And I'd sort of already set up all of these things about her world. I don't know. I just decided it would be fun to focus on her. I wasn't looking at any stats or anything, it was just a fun world. I like to write about all of them, but I was having a moment where I just wanted to write about her.

Chris Lilley is the successful writer behind the character Ja'mie King and its various series. CONTRIBUTED

What does it mean for you that HBO is airing Ja'mie King in North America almost at the same time as it airs in Australia? Usually we get it much later.
It's really good that they're doing that because there is always a six-month delay, and these days it's one world with all the technology so, yeah, it was always a disappointment that six months later American people got to see the show. Now it's only about three weeks after Australia, and it's really great. And they are giving it a great time slot on Sunday nights and HBO is really excited about this one.

Does it also help reduce online piracy?
Yeah, hopefully. I think I'm supposed to care about that, but I just can't. When you make a show you just want people to see it. You want people to be affected by it and to love it and experience it. I don't mind that much, as long as people see it and spread the word. (Pause) I shouldn't be promoting pirating (laughs). I would probably be rich if pirating didn't exist, but, yeah, as long as people see it.

Do you have to tweak the humour of the show to appeal to an international audience?
No, I learned that pretty early on. HBO was really excited about (We Can Be Heroes) and invited me over and said, 'We love what you're doing, can you do an American version? Can you come over and do an American accent?' And then I was like, 'Wouldn't that just take away from what it's all about? I think what you love about it is that it's Australian.' And then they kind of agreed with me and said, 'We're gonna buy the next show that you do.' So they bought Summer Heights High and they aired that — and that had a huge response for them. So I think we both realized that it's making the show here, and not trying to impress people or trying to second-guess what people like, and just being true to what I like, is what's really working. The new show definitely doesn't try to be American or anything. Obviously you're making it for the audience, but the audience is pretty universal.

Last question

What was your own high school experience like?

- **Mirror image?** "Well, my school was actually a private school, so it was very much like Ja'mie's school. And I think I always craved going to a public school. I kinda wanted that more "real" experience. So maybe I'm still trying to deal with that thing with the theme of the show."

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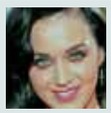
METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Twitter

@LouisTomlinson
Got woke up to find out I got hacked ! Working on re-following people now sorryyyyy :(Big loveeee!!

@WhitneyCummings
If I didn't text you back it means I texted someone else by accident

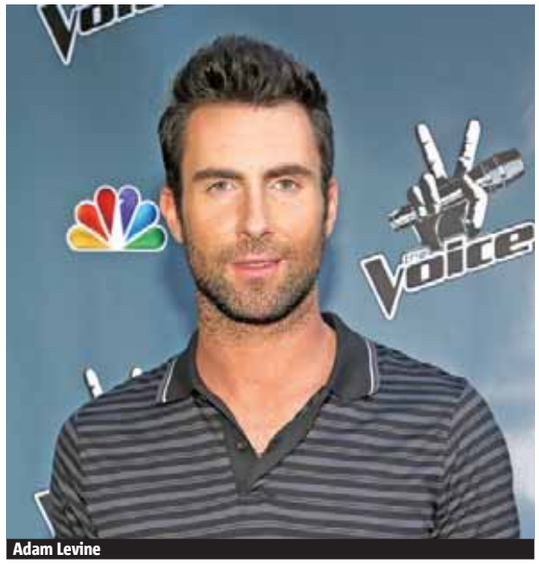


@katyperry
Yes, unconditional love sometimes feels like being hit by a car... Or being on fire... How does it feel to you?

Kelly Clarkson

Santa came through for mom-to-be Kelly

Kelly Clarkson wasn't joking when she said she was planning to get started on that family as soon as possible after marrying Brandon Blackstock last month. The singer took to Twitter this week with some very big news: "I'm pregnant! Brandon and I are so excited! Best early Christmas present ever," she wrote. As recently as Oct. 30, during a radio interview, Clarkson was hinting about her holiday wish list. "Everybody keeps saying, 'What do you want for Christmas?' she said. "And I'm like, 'I want to be pregnant.'"



Adam Levine

Yes Adam it's true, you're this year's Sexiest Man

Look upon him and weep, all ye lesser men, for People has named Adam Levine 2013's Sexiest Man Alive. Channing Tatum, 2012's Sexiest Man Alive, is like dirt to us now.

The Maroon 5 singer has had plenty of chances to drum up votes in his campaign for the office: He's kind of been everywhere this year. He's a judge on The Voice, he's shooting a movie with Keira Knightley called Can a Song Save Your Life? (is it a Maroon 5 song?) and he has a clothing line at Kmart. Serious question: Is it possible to shop at Kmart and buy a piece of clothing not designed by a celebrity? Every single one of them seems to have one.

"As a musician, you have fantasies that you want to win Grammys, but I didn't really think that this was on the table," the singer told People. "I was just amazed and stunned and it almost seemed like they were kidding, but they weren't, so that's cool."

They could still be kidding! Maybe it's a long con. Adam comes in for his cover shoot and just as the shutter snaps, People dumps a bucket of pig's blood over his head. Run, Adam! It's a trap! They're all going to laugh at you! Don't use your telekinetic powers, People magazine's not worth it! **MELINDA TAUB**
MWN IN NYC

Angelina Jolie. ALL IMAGES GETTY

Don't wine about a thing Angie, your life is perfect

Angelina Jolie is having a pretty good week, accolade-wise. The actress and director, who picked up an honorary Oscar at the Governor's Awards earlier this week, also has a hit wine on her hands. Wine Spectator has named the Jolie-Pitt & Perrin Cotes de Provence Rose Miraval the best rosé wine in the world. The wine is "refined and elegant, offering pure and concentrated flavours of dried red berry, tangerine and melon," managing editor Kim Marcus writes. "The focused finish features flint and spice notes, with a hint of cream." A bottle retails for $28, for those looking to share in the celebration.

Adam Brody

Brody blindsides his girl with abrupt proposal

Former The O.C. star Adam Brody knows how to catch a girl off-guard. He reportedly blindsided girlfriend and former Gossip Girl star Leighton Meester with a marriage proposal, according to Star magazine. "Leighton and Adam are crazy about each other and have talked about getting married eventually," a source explains. "But she had no idea he would propose so soon. It was the surprise of her life and she's ecstatic. Right now their plan is to get married next summer. They are still deciding on (where to do it.)"

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Model call: Kloss is now in session

Vogue Paris named Karlie Kloss one of the top 30 models of the 2000s.
GETTY IMAGES

Over the buzz of the blow dryer, we caught up with supermodel Karlie Kloss behind-the-scenes of the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show. Wearing bell bottoms and a pink robe, Kloss was the picture of composure in her styling chair — a calm contrast to the frantic stylists and press running around the huge pink room. The newly 21-year-old Angel lets us in on her chopped locks and face favourites.

You debuted a drastic haircut last year. Are you planning on growing it out?
I am loving the short hair.

Eau de Cheveux

"When you're with a boy, it's always nice to have your hair smell good! It's better than perfume."
Karlie Kloss

That's the thing about a great cut — you don't have to style it. I find my short hair to be so much easier in the morning. And it's different for me. I've never done this before. Last year at this time was when I first cut it and shocked everyone. I've gotten used to it now and I really love it.

Any beauty tips or products you're loving?
There's this line that Victoria's Secret has called So Sexy that smells so good. There's something about the shampoo and the conditioner. When you're with a boy, it's always nice to have your hair smell good! It's better than perfume. I also love when I'm going out for a night and wearing a short dress, to put a little bit of olive oil on my hands, and put it onto my legs. I just rub it on my skin for a nice sheen. It looks really good and it photographs really nicely.

A merry makeover to everyone

At lash, my blush has come along. Dolce & Gabbana's makeup guru is all about bold as the weather gets cold

TINA CHADHA
Metro World News

Put your favourite orange lipstick away already: Dolce & Gabbana national makeup artist Christian McCulloch says that fall/winter is all about the richer tones, like fuchsia and burgundy.

To style the new bold pout, go easy on the eyes, he says.

"It's fresher without a heavy eye," says McCulloch. "A pale shadow, like a gold or champagne, is really pretty and easy, because it doesn't require precision. Just something shimmery across your eyelid with great lashes."

Christian McCulloch
CONTRIBUTED

But what's the makeup artist — who gets Scarlett Johansson and Michelle Williams red-carpet ready — really loving?

"My big thing at the moment is lashes and lips," says McCulloch. "Really amazing lashes, maybe with a winged eyeliner." He shows us how to create the look.

Create a cat-eye
"It's tricky," admits McCulloch. He suggests sketching out your line softly first with a pencil. "This is to see the angle, and to see how it looks with your eye open before you go in with a liquid applicator," he says. "If you paint a flick on an eye when it's closed, it can look a bit too horizontal when you open your eye. Look in the mirror and see where you want that flick, and then create a tiny dot with a pencil and paint from that dot down toward the corner of your lashes. I also take the pencil and run it along the inner rim of the eye, top and bottom. That'll create that (feline) Sophia Loren, Audrey Hepburn look."

Thick or thin?
"I like a thicker cat eye," says the artist. "Thick is cool; it makes it strong. It doesn't have to be Amy Winehouse-level, but that Kate Moss-y thing is nice."

Now for the cheeks
"I'm not one for heavy-duty cheek colour," says McCulloch. "But I do love to bring in bronzer to the cheek through winter. In winter, you want a little colour in your face too! Dolce & Gabbana has a bronzing colour called Desert, which I use for contouring. The two blush colours I use most are an apricot and a pale pink to create a soft flush on the cheek."

Party-ready
"I always like sparkle. Shimmery and metallic eye shadows are fun. Also, liquid liner is a great party look. I think a liner along the lash line and winged out is beautiful."

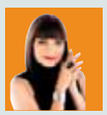
His must-haves

- **Dolce & Gabbana Passion Duo lipstick in Feminine.** "It's a pinky-brown with a little bit of shimmer in it." $35, saksfifthavenue.com

- **A good lip balm.** "Nuxe has a lovely, waxy honey lip balm, which is great conditioning for the winter." Nuxe Reve de Miel lip balm, $19, amazon.com

- **Dolce & Gabbana Passion Eyes mascara.** "The new mascara actually has a curling quality. We've all been quite shocked that it actually lifts and curls the lashes without having to use an eyelash curler prior." $32, sephora.com

Twitter



JEANNE SPACE
Jeanne Beker
life@metronews.ca

TWITTER HAS BECOME A COOL AND SUCCINCT WAY OF COMMUNICATING. IT ALLOWS ME TO BE ACCESSIBLE, INSTANTLY SPEAK MY MIND AND CONNECTS ME WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE. WHETHER IT'S A FASHION QUESTION OR YOU JUST WANT TO COMMENT ON LIFE'S BIGGER PICTURE, I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

With my hunky firefighter #heroes who helped raise lots of money @HRRH_Foundation benefit tonite #onfire #call911

Chic afternoon on Chabanel! Working in #Montreal with @DerubTania on @EDITbyJeanneB FW2014

Trends Report

Tired of the same old long hair styles? Have you considered rocking a pixie cut, like Hunger Games star Jennifer Lawrence? You may be nervous to take the bold snip but don't be! Go online to Trends Report to see how one woman transformed her long locks into a fierce pixie cut.

Follow Irene on twitter @MetroIreneK or on Instagram: kuanirene

metronews.ca/voices/trends-report

A low in calories and fat chocolatey peanut butter indulgence? Rejoice!

ROSE REISMAN
For more, visit rosereisman.com or follow her on twitter @rosereisman

Peanut butter, cheesecake and chocolate flavours combine to make this an outstanding, decadent dessert. I keep the fat and calories down by using a combination of ricotta and light cream cheese and more cocoa powder than chocolate.

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Lightly coat a 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray.

2. To make the brownie layer beat together the sugar, oil, egg and vanilla in a bowl. In another bowl, stir together the flour, cocoa and baking powder. Stir the wet mixture into the dry mixture just until combined. Stir in the sour cream and chocolate chips. Pour the mixture into the pan.

3. To make the cheesecake layer combine the ricotta, sugar, cream cheese, sour cream, peanut butter, egg, flour and vanilla in a food processor. Process until smooth. Pour the mixture on top of the brownie layer.

4. Bake the cheesecake in the centre of the oven for 35 minutes. The brownie layer may rise slightly around the edges. Chill before serving. Decorate with the icing sugar (with optional chocolate sauce and toasted peanuts).

THE BEST OF ROSE REISMAN (WHITECAP BOOKS) BY ROSE REISMAN.

Ingredients

Brownie Layer
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 1/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Cheesecake Layer
- 1 1/2 cups reduced-fat ricotta cheese
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup softened reduced-fat cream cheese
- 1/3 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 1/3 cup smooth natural peanut butter
- 1 large egg
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- icing sugar for decoration

Peanut Butter Brownie Cheesecake

This recipe serves 12 and is 304 calories and 14 grams of fat per serving. ROSE REISMAN

For your phone

Cake-Boy Classics (iPhone/iPad/ Android; $6.99)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

This outrageously styled pastry app offers flavourful cheesecakes, inventive tarts, and heartwarming dessert classics. It includes videos, timers, recipe finders, and a basics guide to help you invent your own.

So picture perfect you'll want to take a selfie with it

A serving of this Tiramisu is 264 calories and 8 grams of fat. NEWS CANADA

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup (125 ml) warm, strong coffee
- 9 packets or 4 1/2 tsp Pure Via Turbinado Raw Cane sugar and stevia blend sweetener
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) prepared light whipped topping
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) vanilla extract
- 8 crisp ladyfingers
- 1 tsp (5 ml) unsweetened cocoa

Tiramisu, the Italian delicacy, is a great, time-saving dessert that can be prepared up to eight hours in advance and served as needed. Lightly sweetened with naturally-sourced stevia, it's the perfect way to sensibly indulge.

1. Combine coffee and one packet Pure Via Turbinado. Stir until the sweetener is dissolved. Let coffee cool until lukewarm.

2. Meanwhile, whisk ricotta cheese, whipped topping, the additional Pure Via Turbinado sweetener and vanilla. Refrigerate until ready to use.

3. Place coffee in shallow bowl. Dip four of ladyfingers into coffee and let stand a five seconds. Discard any remaining coffee.

4. Remove and place two ladyfingers side by side on a plate for each tiramisu. Spread each tiramisu with 1/4 of the ricotta mixture. Sprinkle each with 1/4 teaspoon (1 ml) of the cocoa. Repeat dipping and layering.

5. Refrigerate, covered with plastic wrap, at least two and up to eight hours before serving.

NEWS CANADA/ PUREVIA.CA

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I've got cabin fever

Baby, it's cold outside. Now that the summer cottage is a distant memory, warm up your space with these retro lodge accessories. They'll help take you back to the country.

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

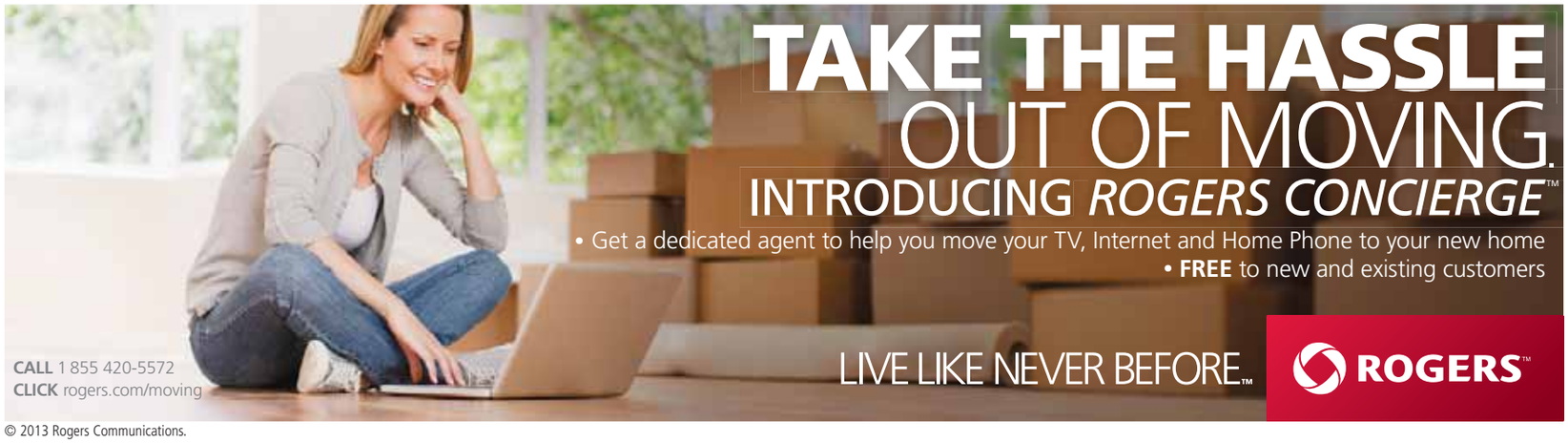
Iconic art, now available for the sofa. Charles Pachter Baywatch Pillow, $95, thebay.com.

Take a walk on the wild side — this rug combines style, whimsy and comfort underfoot. Tufted six-by-eight-foot Ursine Rug, $1,000 US, anthropologie.com.

Dream of the slopes while you're eating breakfast. Retro Vinyl Ski Place Mat, $3.50, simons.ca.

From baking a cake to frying fish, cast iron is the little black dress of the kitchen. Lodge Cast Iron Grill Pan, $25, westelm.com.

Keep your electronics cosy yet stylish during the winter. Luxe Faux Fur iPad Case, $39 US, restorationhardware.com.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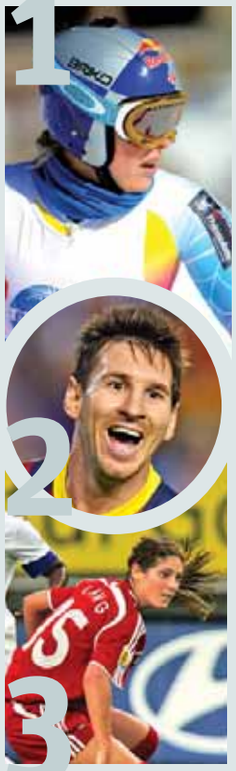
4 SPORTS

Sports in pictures



1 Skiing. Vonn's Olympic bid in jeopardy

Lindsey Vonn's publicist says the reigning Olympic downhill champion partially tore a ligament in her surgically repaired right knee during a training crash on Tuesday.

What was not immediately clear was if it would affect her Olympic hopes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2 Soccer. Messi scores third Golden Boot

Barcelona forward Lionel Messi was presented with a record third Golden Boot on Wednesday for scoring the most goals (46) in Europe's domestic leagues last season. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 Comeback trail. Lang makes the cut

Nine months after Kara Lang launched her comeback effort from a serious knee injury, the soccer star has been named to Canada's roster for Sunday's friendly against Mexico in Vancouver. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Riders head coach deflects pressure

Grey Cup. Chamblin and host team have faced huge expectations all year, culminating Sunday

They're the overwhelming favourite as Grey Cup hosts and are carrying the weight of an entire province's expectations.

But the pressure is off the Saskatchewan Roughriders, according to head coach Corey Chamblin. He says getting to Sunday's CFL championship was the real challenge.

"The biggest pressure for our team was making sure no one else sat in our locker-room," Chamblin said Wednesday at the annual Grey Cup coaches news conference. "It's about working all off-season, all year to protect your house and that was the biggest thing and the biggest pressure we had.

"We're in it now and as I tell the guys, if we're good enough to be in it we're good enough to win it. It's time for it to be decided now on the football field, not in the media, not with trash talking."

Riders general manager Brendan Taman made it clear early this off-season he was serious about fielding a Grey Cup contender with Regina hosting the big game. He acquired receiver Geroy Simon from the B.C. Lions before adding defensive linemen Ricky Foley and John Chick and defensive back Dwight Anderson in free agency.

Not only are Simon, Foley, Chick and Anderson all CFL veterans but each has a Grey Cup ring, Chick earning his with the Riders in 2007 before heading to the NFL. However, adding experienced performers to an already solid core only served to jack up expectations in football-mad Saskatchewan, especially after both B.C. and Toronto had captured Grey Cup titles as the host city the past two years.

The Riders might be playing on their home field but Chamblin is attempting to reduce distractions by putting players in hotels and imposing a nightly curfew.

"When you look at the Grey Cup, it's a championship game (involving) the two best teams in the league," he said. "The biggest thing is I want them to stay in the routine they've been in, that they only think football." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Roughriders head coach Corey Chamblin speaks to the media in Regina on Tuesday. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"If that's what it takes for them to win a championship then go right ahead."

Roughriders head Corey Chamblin when asked the traditional question of whether or not he's OK with his players having sex on the eve of the Grey Cup.

Visitors in the cold

Ticats weather prairie chill

For Hamilton Tiger-Cats like Josh Bartel, Mosaic Stadium might as well have been on Pluto given the frigid temperatures Wednesday.

The Eastern champion Ticats ventured outside into the Grey Cup deep freeze and it didn't take long before players with visors looked like they needed an ice-scraper to see. Warm-air heaters drew a crowd. And when the lengthy practice ended, two snowplows took over the field.

The Hamilton players exchanged helmets for Grey Cup tuques and happily headed for the warmth of their hotel.

"I've told the boys that I'm going to be doing a lot of complaining (Sunday)," said Bartel, Hamilton's Australian punter.

The temperature was listed at minus-16 but it felt like minus-28. The forecast for Sunday is improved, with a daytime high of minus-one and low of minus-12. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ticats receiver Andy Fantuz on Wednesday in Regina. THE CANADIAN PRESS

World Cup. Algerian celebrations turn tragic

Celebrations for Algeria's win over Burkina Faso that sent the country's soccer team to the 2014 World Cup finals left 12 people dead and some 240 injured, authorities reported Wednesday.

People poured into the streets of this soccer-mad country late Tuesday after the game and most of the deaths and injuries appear to be from road accidents as cars raced around in celebration.

The statement from emergency services said five celebrating fans were killed when their van slid off the road into a ravine in the mountain town of Bejaia, east of Algiers, while four others died in the southern city of Biskra when two trucks collided. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tennis

Bouchard named newcomer of 2013

Canadian Eugenie Bouchard is the WTA's newcomer of the year after reaching at least the quarter-finals five times in the 2013 season.

The 19-year-old Montreal native is ranked No. 32 in the world, tops among teenagers and Canadians. She reached her first WTA final in Osaka last month. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLB

Source says Fielder traded by Tigers

A person with knowledge of the deal says the Detroit Tigers and Texas have agreed to a trade that would send slugger Prince Fielder to the Rangers for second baseman Ian Kinsler. The person spoke on condition of anonymity Wednesday night. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Litigation. Armstrong settles with company looking to sue

A day before he was scheduled to give sworn testimony about his use of performance-enhancing drugs, Lance Armstrong reached a settlement on Wednesday with an insurance company that was seeking $3 million in performance bonuses it paid him from 1999 to 2001.

Nebraska-based Acceptance Insurance sued Armstrong in Texas earlier this year after he admitted he doped during a career in which he won the Tour de France seven times.

Acceptance attorney Mark Kincaid and Armstrong attorney Tim Herman declined to disclose details of the settlement. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Compensation

$3 million. The amount an insurance company was seeking from the cyclist for previous performance bonuses.

Murder case

Pistorius faces two additional gun charges

Oscar Pistorius was served with new indictment papers Wednesday containing two extra charges believed to allege that he recklessly shot his gun out the open sunroof of a car last year and fired someone else's handgun at a restaurant weeks before he killed girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp.

He now faces the two additional charges relating to firing guns in public. Pistorius will likely face all four charges at his trial starting in March. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Johnson inks one-year contract with the Padres

Josh Johnson reacts to leaving the game during the second inning of a game against the Detroit Tigers in April. LEON HALIP/GETTY IMAGES

$8-million deal. Johnson wanted to be closer to his Las Vegas home, Padres were willing to gamble

Josh Johnson was looking for a team close to his Las Vegas home, and the San Diego Padres were looking for a potential top-of-the-rotation pitcher.

The sides quickly agreed on an $8-million, one-year contract that was finalized on Wednesday.

The Padres, coming off a second straight finish of 76-86, hope they're getting the Johnson who was an All-Star with Miami in 2009 and 2010 and not the one slowed by triceps and forearm injuries last year while with Toronto.

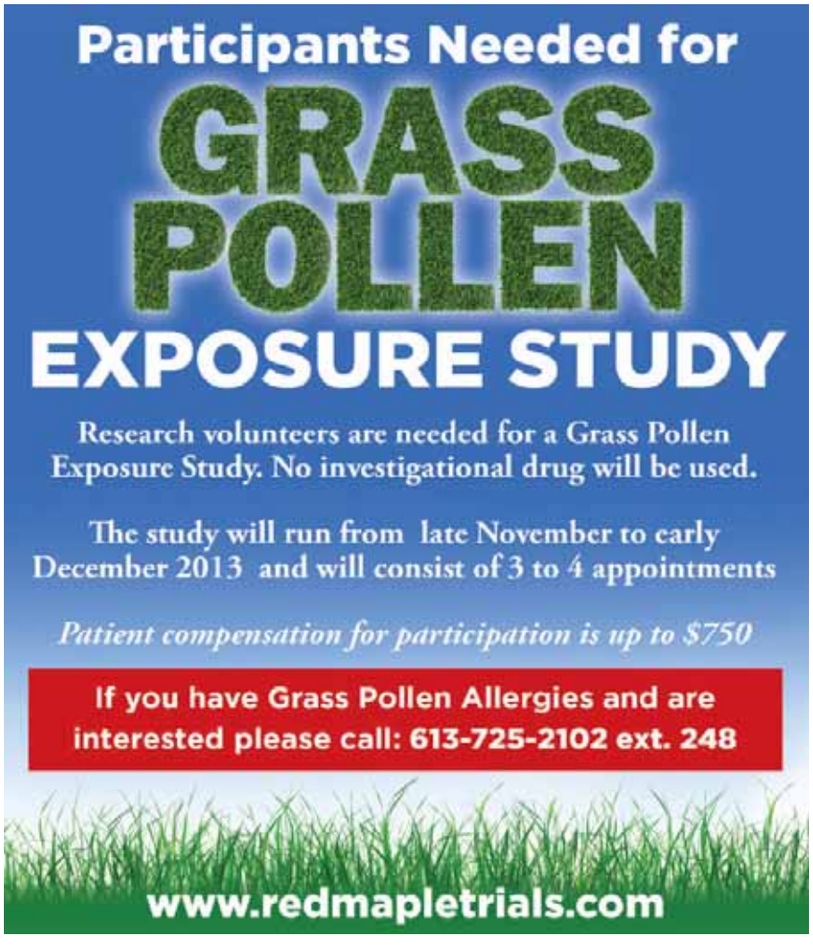
General manager Josh Byrnes said the Padres decided that if they could find a starter who had the chance to be a difference-maker, they were going to pursue him.

"Here's a guy who led the league in ERA who has been a dominant pitcher," Byrnes said. "We know there's risk in any signing but we're very excited about the upside, what he can bring and now what our rotation can do to deliver us toward our goal. We want to be an October team. We really feel like the evolution of our starting pitching and bringing in Josh, we've taken a big step in that direction over the last 12 months." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"We know there's a risk in any signing but we're very excited about the upside."

Josh Byrnes, Padres general manager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NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	21	14	6	1	59	38	29
Tampa Bay	21	14	7	0	66	55	28
Toronto	21	13	7	1	62	49	27
Detroit	22	9	6	7	54	62	25
Montreal	22	11	9	2	58	47	24
Ottawa	21	8	9	4	60	67	20
Florida	22	6	12	4	49	72	16
Buffalo	23	5	17	1	42	72	11

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	21	13	8	0	59	48	26
Washington	21	12	8	1	69	59	25
NY Rangers	21	10	11	0	43	52	20
Carolina	21	8	9	4	40	59	20
New Jersey	20	7	8	5	42	49	19
NY Islanders	22	8	11	3	63	73	19
Philadelphia	20	8	10	2	40	50	18
Columbus	21	7	11	3	52	64	17

Wednesday's results
Minnesota at Ottawa
Pittsburgh at Washington
New Jersey at Anaheim
Columbus at Calgary

Tuesday's results
St. Louis 4 Buffalo 1
Toronto 5 NY Islanders 2
Philadelphia 5 Ottawa 2
Nashville 2 Detroit 0
Montreal 6 Minnesota 2
Boston 2 NY Rangers 1
Colorado 5 Chicago 1
Edmonton 7 Columbus 0
Florida 3 Vancouver 2 (SO)
Los Angeles 5 Tampa Bay 2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	22	14	4	4	79	66	32
St. Louis	20	14	3	3	70	47	31
Colorado	20	15	5	0	64	42	30
Minnesota	22	13	5	4	57	50	30
Dallas	20	11	7	2	58	56	24
Winnipeg	23	10	10	3	61	66	23
Nashville	21	10	9	2	48	63	22

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	23	15	6	2	72	59	32
San Jose	21	13	3	5	72	50	31
Phoenix	21	14	4	3	73	66	31
Los Angeles	22	15	6	1	63	48	31
Vancouver	23	11	8	4	58	61	26
Calgary	21	7	11	3	59	79	17
Edmonton	23	6	15	2	60	83	14

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Thursday's games — All Times Eastern
St. Louis at Boston, 7 p.m.
Nashville at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Buffalo at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
Chicago at Winnipeg, 8 p.m.
NY Rangers at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Colorado at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Florida at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.
New Jersey at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.
Tampa Bay at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

Friday's games
Montreal at Washington, 7 p.m.
NY Islanders at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Florida at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Anaheim, 10 p.m.
Columbus at Vancouver, 10 p.m.

MLS PLAYOFFS

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

(Two-game series; aggregate goals)

EASTERN CONFERENCE

KANSAS CITY VS HOUSTON

Leg 2 — Saturday's game
Houston at Kansas City, 7:30 p.m.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

REAL SALT LAKE VS PORTLAND

Leg 2 — Sunday's game
Real Salt Lake at Portland, 9 p.m.

CFL PLAYOFFS

101ST GREY CUP

Sunday's game — All Times Eastern
Hamilton at Saskatchewan, 6 p.m.

DIVISION FINALS

EAST DIVISION

Sunday's result
Hamilton 36 Toronto 24

WEST DIVISION

Sunday's result
Saskatchewan 35 Calgary 13

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Indiana	9	1	.900	—
Miami	8	3	.727	1 1/2
Chicago	6	3	.667	2 1/2
Philadelphia	5	7	.417	5
Atlanta	6	5	.545	3 1/2
Charlotte	5	6	.455	4 1/2
Orlando	4	6	.400	5
Detroit	4	6	.400	5
Toronto	4	7	.364	5 1/2
Cleveland	4	7	.364	5 1/2
Boston	4	8	.333	6
Washington	3	7	.300	6
New York	3	7	.300	6
Brooklyn	3	7	.300	6
Milwaukee	2	7	.222	6 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	9	1	.900	—
Portland	9	2	.818	1/2
Golden State	8	3	.727	1 1/2
Oklahoma City	7	3	.700	2
Houston	8	4	.667	2
L.A. Clippers	7	4	.636	2 1/2
Dallas	7	4	.636	2 1/2
Minnesota	7	5	.583	3
Memphis	6	5	.545	3 1/2
Phoenix	5	5	.500	4
L.A. Lakers	5	7	.417	5
Denver	4	6	.400	5
New Orleans	4	6	.400	5
Sacramento	3	7	.300	6
Utah	1	11	.083	9

Wednesday's results
Indiana at New York
Washington at Cleveland
Brooklyn at Charlotte
Toronto at Philadelphia
Miami at Orlando
Detroit at Atlanta
Portland at Milwaukee
Utah at New Orleans
L.A. Clippers at Minnesota
Boston at San Antonio
Sacramento at Phoenix
Houston at Dallas
Memphis at Golden State

Thursday's games — All Times Eastern
L.A. Clippers at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
Chicago at Denver, 10:30 p.m.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
If your instincts tell you to follow a path you would not normally take, do so without hesitation. The Sun's imminent change of sign promises all wonderful adventures for you over the coming four weeks.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You will do what is expected of you today but that does not mean you are obligated to do favours for everyone. The most useful thing you can learn over the next 24 hours is to say "no".

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Loved ones may have found it hard to put their feelings into words in recent weeks but as of tomorrow, they will make up for it. They will come right out and tell you how they feel.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You have started many new projects in recent weeks but now you must ask yourself what you are hoping to achieve. Do you really need to work on so many things at once? You know the answer.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
If a project you had high hopes for does not seem to be working, end it. That may sound drastic but as the Sun is about to move into the most dynamic area of your chart you don't have time to waste on failures.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You may find it hard to let your hair down over the next few days. Take it as a sign that you have important tasks to perform. You will know when it's time for fun and games.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
A minor argument has been blown out of all proportion and now people who were once your friends can hardly bring themselves to say hello. It's up to you to end this stupidity.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You may find it hard to get along with people today, especially if you have doubts they are on your side. Are you right to be suspicious or is your mind playing tricks? You can't know, so don't take chances.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You have sacrificed so much in recent weeks and now there is nothing left to give. That's OK. Tomorrow the tide will turn in your favour and it will be you who receives so many amazing things from the universe.

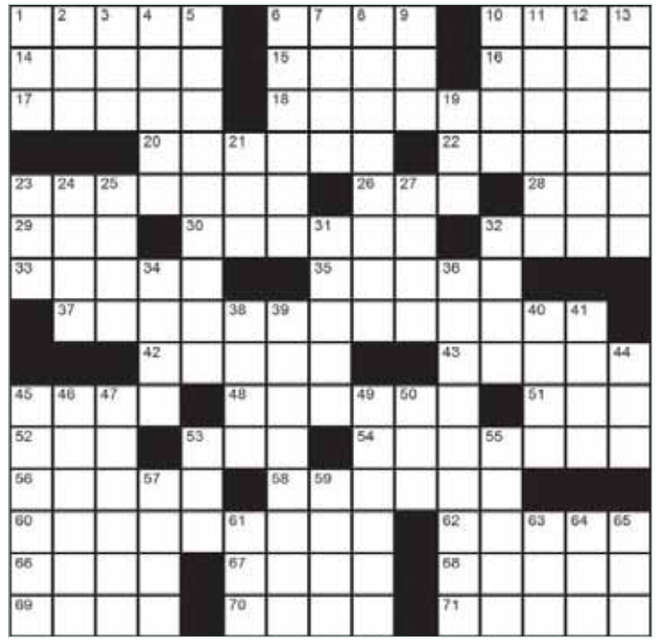
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
In the greater scheme of things, everything happens for a reason and if you keep your eyes and ears open today it's possible that you may catch a glimpse of the grand design.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Your aim now must be to make friends, make plans and make the most of your talents. It does not matter what other people expect of you, it matters only what you expect of yourself.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may not be aggressive by nature but as the Sun approaches the career angle of your chart today and tomorrow you will certainly be assertive. What is it you desire the most? Take it. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

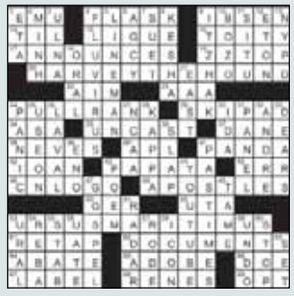
See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Comic legend Ms. Burnett
6. Li'l drill instructors
10. Rake's spot
14. 'River Horse', commonly
15. Q. "How do you spell the synonym for 'Precedence'?" A. "P-r-_-_-_-t-y."
16. Ms. Dunham
17. Job type, __. Asst.
18. The Liberals, colloquially: 2 wds.
20. Where Kampala is the capital city
22. '60s abstractionism: 2 wds.
23. PEI: __ Island Provincial Park
26. Yellowknife's locale, for short
28. The Lion
29. Caesar's 106
30. Crop up
32. Port of Yemen
33. When repeated with Zou, French tune Canadian actress Jessica Pare sang on "Mad Men"
35. Island near the Statue of Liberty
37. Hagar The Horrible's family wears these: 2 wds.
42. Honolulu hello
43. Swerved
45. With competence
48. Kilroy's Mr.
51. Bio info
52. Sorrow
53. "Dallas" character
54. La Compagnie de la Baie _'__
56. __ Test Dummies
58. Withstand
60. Schmoozer's greetings: 2 wds.
62. Pondered
66. Say it's nay
67. Buckeye State
68. Keen
69. Celtic language
70. "Because of partner / Take my hand..." goes this Leonard Cohen tune: 3 wds.
38. Ms. Ephron
39. CBC personality Jian
40. Poetic contraction
41. Kind of lily
44. Hideaway
45. Canuck band, __ Fire
46. Bone-holding digging dog
47. Gains knowledge
49. __-__ favourite
50. Pre-Fri. day, variantly
53. Greek letter
55. Two
57. Canadian singer Ms. Sweetnam
59. No: German
61. Plant seeds
63. "How ya doin'?"
64. Airport posting, for short
65. Benicio __ Toro
__-Dixie" (2005)
71. Tibet's neighbour

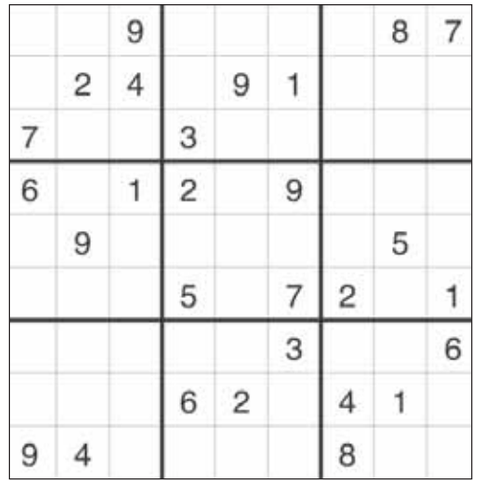
Down
1. Pussycat Dolls hit: "Don't __"
2. Care
3. Circling stat.
4. Yves Saint Laurent perfume
5. Quebec's fifth largest city
6. John Hancock, in 1776
7. Tragically Hip's Mr. Downie
8. The Bermuda __
9. Kennel command
10. "__ Shot" (1977)
11. Joyfully ring in
12. Menu meal
13. __, Ohio
19. Stove topper
21. Strong-__
23. Banned pollutant, commonly
24. Tel __
25. Inconclusive
27. Water source
31. Sobering spot for celebs
32. Voyaging on the ocean
34. Approve
36. "If you want a

Yesterday's Crossword

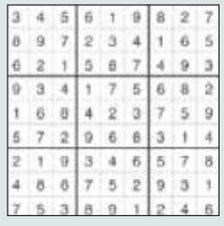


Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



Yesterday's Sudoku



Today
3°/0°
Variable

Friday
6°/-6°
Showers
80%

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Meet Beatrice.

Born in New York and raised in California, Beatrice's childhood dream was to be a ventriloquist. As a kid, she would make her mom take her to the library so she could borrow ventriloquism videos to study. "They're the weirdest people," she says, "and I felt that that was my kind of community." She went on to study Sociology and Drama at a university in Colorado, and then completed her Master's Degree in Performance Studies at NYU. At 24, her ideal job now is to be an audio archivist, although she plans on returning to ventriloquism if all else fails. Her outlook on life has in part been influenced by her Buddhist upbringing. Her dad, a lifelong winemaker, met her mom at work in Maui in the '70s. At the time, Beatrice's mom was a rodeo queen, but she is now teaching at a Tibetan Meditation center in California. In her free time, Beatrice likes watching Scottish films, playing pool, painting, playing the violin, and coming up with ideas for graphic novels. She is always happy when she gets the chance to eat her grandmother's homemade Italian gnocchi. Beatrice is wearing the Geo Lace Demi Bra, Geo Lace Hipster Brief and Mohair Loose Cardigan.

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